THE DOVBTING BELEEVER: OR, A TREATISE CONTAINING

1. The Nature
2. The Kinds
3. The Springs
4. The Remedies

of *Doubtings*, incident to weak Beleevers.

BY

OBADIAH SEDGVVICK, *Batchelor in Divinity, and Minister of* COVENT-GARDEN.

LONDON, Printed by *R. I.* for *S. Bowtell*, and are to be sold at his Shop in Popes-head Alley, at the Signe of the Bible. 1653.

ALLYN · SIMMONS ·
SOLI DEO GLORIA
CHRISTUS

TO THE

Right Honourable,

ROBERT

Earle of VVarwick,

Baron of Leez, &c.

My Noble Lord, and free Patron.

My Lord:

A Renewed heart is a very Heaven in our little World, and Faith is the only Sun in that Heaven: The Sinner never comes to be precious, till he comes to be pious; and the value of that piety still advanceth,

according to the quantity of true faith, as the Ring is the more considerable with the Diamond. I cannot conceive of a more compendious way for any Christians full and constant revenues, then this, To get faith, and still to use it: The sum or product of which would be this, Grace and Glory, Heaven and Earth are ours.

Satan well knowes what a serviceable channell Faith is for all our traffique, either for our ship to lanch out into

duties, or for Gods ſhip to come laden in to us with mercies: and therefore there is no Grace which he batters, & conflicts ſo with, as with faith: If wee weaken or ſhake foundations, this hath a ſpreading influence into the whole building: A Chriſtians faith cannot be wronged, but preſently all the ſpirituall frame becomes ſenſible of wrong and loſſe.

In my weake judgement, it were a great prudence to ſecure that, which being ſecured,

now ſecures all. Nothing grows weak where faith grows ſtrong. My Lord, This poor Treatiſe which I preſume to front with your name, is like *Aaron* and *Hur*, who ſtaid up the hands of *Moſes*; So doth this Treatiſe indeavour to ſtay the hands of faith in a weak Beleever, who hath an ample eſtate on the ſhore and at land; but thoſe waves of doubtings (when he is thruſting in) too often make him to fall back & ſtagger: Whence follows this great unhappineſſe, That where-

whereas his faith might have ſerved in many precious comforts, it is (almoſt a whole life) imployed onely to anſwer fears and doubts. I humbly preſent the ſubſequent Worke to your Lordſhips perſonall uſe, and publique patronage. Be pleaſed (at your leaſure) to peruſe it, and regard it as the firſt cognizance of my thankfulnes to your Honour, for the Living which you did ſo freely & lovingly confer upon me, wherein I ſhall deſire faithfully to ſerve

your Lord and mine.

Now the Almighty God, and blessed Father, abundantly inrich your noble heart with all saving graces, and continue you long to be an instrument of much glory to himself, comfort to his Church, and good to our Common-wealth.

Your Honours

perpetually obliged,

Obadiah Sedgwicke.

To the Christian READER.

THis Treatise which now is presented to a publike construction, was (many yeers past) the subject of my private Meditations and Sermons. I did not affect any farther publication of it, then in the Pulpit; but the importunity of others hath compelled it thus to appear in Print.

Not-

Not that the manner of handling the Subject (here insisted on) is excellent or exquisite, but that the matter handled may be supposed to be of common use & benefit, as a little star hath influence, though not that glory which is proper to the Sun.

The case which is here put & discussed, is a case of common experience; there is no beleever, but sometime or other

ther will confeſs it is his. The Sun being ſeated in an heavenly orb, ſhineth with a very pure & conſtant light, but the candle (though ſet, & burning in a golden candleſtick, yet) burns with a ſnuffe, & much variableneſſe. When Chriſtians are tranſlated, and tranſplanted from earth to heaven, then their graces ſhall become perfections, there are no defects

fects in heaven, there are no mixtures in heaven, but whatsoever is pure there, it is altogether pure: yet on earth it is otherwise, neither the habits of grace, nor the acts of grace are alone in any Christian: When I would doe good, evil is present with me, *said* Paul; *And*, I beleeve, Lord, help my unbelief, *said that poor man in the Gospel. Where is the*

be-

beleever who insists not more on his fears then on his faith? and is not oftner lamenting his doubts, then rejoycing in his assurances? none have an interest in Christ, but beleevers; none have title to a solid and setled peace, but they; and yet we see the children fearful, & bondmen confident, the best of men still in suit, & the worst of men quiet, as if in full possession;

none doubting leſs then ſuch as have moſt cauſe to doubt, & none doubting more then ſuch as have moſt cauſe to triumph in Chriſt. And in truth thus it wil be, whiles groſs ignorance veils over preſumptuous ſinners, and miſbelief is incident to tender ſpirits.

And is not the hand of Joab in this buſineſs too? Is not Satan in all the ſins of wicked men,

and

and in moſt of the troubles of good men? either he tempts us to ſin, & that will cauſe us to doubt; or elſe hee tempts us to doubt, and that wil cauſe us to ſin. Surely it is not the ſhorteſt of his wiles and arts, in matters of Religion, to keepe the judgements of ſome ſtill ſtaggering; and in matters of a ſouls intereſt in Chriſt, to keep the heart ſtill doubting.

Doth

Doth he not know that the Christian cannot so happily improve Christ, who is still in suit to prove his title to Christ?

For the better expediting of these soul-suits, peruse (if thou pleasest) this ensuing Work, which is (I confess) not a garden for every one to walk in, but only physick for the sick or weak. It is intended as an Hospital for the lame, only for a troubled sinner, only for a weak believer: And the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort, even he who establisheth us in Christ, prosper it for his glory and the help of some one or other.

Thy faiths servant,
OBADIAH SEDGWICK.

A Table of the Heads in this TREATISE.

Chap. I.

THE *nature of doubtings.* Page 3

Chap. II.

Foure sorts of doubtings. 10

Those of Inquietation are 11

Either { 1 *Reall, or* 12
2 *Personall.* 13

Chap. III.

Quest. *Whether doubtings may consist with a true faith?*

Sol. *They may.*

1 *This is first explicated* 14
2 *Proved.* 15

Chap. IV.

The spring of doubtings are

1 *Originall sin.* 22
2 *Imperfection in faith.* 24

Which { 1 *Wants ability to argue.* 26
2 *Insists most on discouragements.* ibid.
3 *Is unacquainted with our armory.* 28

3 *The life of sense.* p. 30
What it is. 31
Three demonstrations that it is a cause of doubtings. ib.
4 *Restrainings of faith.* 35
5 *Special sins after conversion.* 42
Foure reasons thereof for doubtings. 43 to 49
6 *Spirituall indispositions.* ib.
Two knots are made by them.
1 *Whether our graces be true.* 50
2 *Whether our services can bee accepted.* 51
7 *Fruitlesse endeavours.* 53
8 *Imbecillity of judgement.* 57
Which first wants the strength of truth, because it wants the apprehension of it. 59
2 *Is easily over-mastered with errour.* ibid.
9 *Ignorance of the doctrine of Justification.* 63
10 *Disputation against the Promises* 72
Three arguments, confirming that to promote Doubtings. 78
11 *Suspension of divine favour.* 79
Foure Grounds for doubting in this

this. 80
12 Crediting of Satans testimony. 84
13 New risings of old sins. 87
Now we question,
1 Reality of pardon. 88
2 Sincerity of repentance. 89
14 Silence in conscience. 91
Foure occasions to doubt by reason thereof. 93 to 96

Chap V.

The cures of doubtings. 97
1 Mortification, a cure of inherent corruption. 98
What kinde of mortifying doth it. 103
Specially of unbeleefe. 108
Three directions for that. 110
2 Faith is to be perfected. 111
Some rules for that. 113
Keep downe the life of sense. 122
Some directions concerning this. ib.
4 Scope is to be given unto faith. 129
Three considerations about this. 131
5 What to doe concerning speciall sins after conversion. 142
Three directions, with encouragements, if followed. 143

6 The case of indisposition. 156
The difference betwixt a dull heart, and a dead heart. 157
All indisposition is not fundamentall. 161
The bent of the heart may be right notwithstanding dulnesses. 164
And a way of acceptance. 168
7 Considerations and directions about supposed succesnesse in duties. 172
8 Knowledge, 1 Distinct, 2 Distinguishing, necessary. 176
Derived conjectures are to be reduced to the prime truths. 182
Foure things of which a weake Christian should be more fully informed.
1 Of preparations to grace. 199
2 Of the operations of grace. 201
3 Of the degrees of grace. ibid.
4 Of the fruits of grace. 208
9 Concerning Justification. 210
Five singular comforts concerning pardon of sinne in it. 211
Other supports from the imputation of Christs righteousnesse. 234

10 *Two kinds of dispute against the Promises,* 236
Five helps about this, 238
11 *Search the causes of the suspension of Gods favour.* 242
The wayes of regaining Gods favour. 248
Quest. *How a Christian may support himselfe in the interim.* 259
12 *Satans testimony of our estates is illegall, and not to be admitted.* 262
13 *Severall times,* 267. *and causes,* 271. *and ends of reviving of old sins.* 274
Quest. *How to know whether it be Satans work or no.* 280
14 *How a silent Conscience may bee made to speake.* 284
How to support our selves under the silence of conscience. 295

In the Additionall part. 296

1 Obj. *Sense of sinfull workings.*
Sol. *Five considerations about them.* 297, &c.
2 Ob. *Sense of wrath.* 303
Sol. *Severall kinds of it.* 304

The

The way to cure it. 307
3 Ob. *A condemning conscience.* ib.
Sol. *Difference betwixt condemnation of the sin, and of the person.* 308
4 Ob. *A feare of the sin against the holy Ghost.* 311
Sol. *What that sin is not.* 312
What the ingredients of it are. 315

A TREATISE OF DOVBTINGS.

From Matth. 14. 31.

O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?

These words containe in them the summe of a Christian in this life, which is this: That he is truly, but yet weakly good. Christ here seeth in *Peter* (though a Disciple) a defective faith, and then a defect of faith: Faith hee saw in him, yet it was defective. It was little faith: There was truth, but there was not such actuall strength in it, as might or should be: And besides this, he espyes in him a defect of faith; not

for the habit of it, but for the act of it, *Wherefore didst thou doubt?* Which words are a conviction that he did doubt, and likewise a correction; Wherefore, *wherefore didst thou doubt?* q. d. Thou didst doubt, but thou didst ill so to doubt.

There are many excellent points which might be observed from the Text, I will name some, and insist only on one of them; Thus then.

1 A true Beleever may be but a weake Beleever, [*Thou of little faith!*]

2 Christ takes notice even of a weake Beleever, [*O thou of little faith!*]

3 Though Christ likes beleeving, yet he dislikes doubting, [*Wherefore didst thou doubt?*]

4 A person may be truly beleeving, who nevertheless is sometimes doubting: in the same person here you see a commendation of the one, and a condemnation of the other, which suppose

pose necessarily a presence of both.

This being the Subject on which I purpose to treat, for the benefit of weake Christians, I shal declare five things concerning it; Namely,

1 The nature of Doubtings.

2 The kinds and diversities of them.

3 Their possible consistence with true faith.

4 Their grounds, and springs, and occasions.

5 Their cures and remedies.

Cap. I.

The nature of Doubtings.

TO understand this, you must know, that in the worst part of the soul, there are severall qualities, viz. 1. Infidelity, which strictly, and amongst those which professe the Gospel, is a positive rejecting of heavenly truths, with

Four qualities in the soule. Joh. 12. 48 Heb. 12. 25

their secret goodnesse; herein men forsake their own mercies by plain dissents and slightings of the good word of grace, as is evident in the Pharisees, *Luk.* 7. 30. who rejected the counsel of God, &c.

2 Despaire, which is a manifest dissent, not so much in respect of the thing, or object, (for this is assented unto as true in respect of it selfe, *viz.* That God is mercifull, and Christ did dye for sinners) but in respect of the person or subject, wherein the soule gives up it selfe as lost, as without the compasse and hopefulnesse of the Divine proclamation: It is perswaded that there is no possibility for it to recover the shore, and therefore sinks in the depths: My meaning is, that such a soul, though it sees that in God, and that in Christ which can save, and doth save others, yet cuts off it selfe, as not at all capable of any interest in the mercy of God, or blood of Christ, and so eternally fals under its owne weight,

As *Jer.* 2. 25. *There is no hope*: no.

Esa. 38. 18 *They that goe downe into the pit cannot hope for thy truth.*

This holds not only in the pit of the grave, but also in the pit of despaire.

as

as is evident in *Iudas* and *Cain*.

Now Despaire, so farre as it makes assent unto Truths, it is opposed unto Infidelity; and so farre as it dissents from speciall goodnesse in them, it is opposed to Faith; and so farre as it concludes impossibility of that good unto it selfe, it is opposed to Hope.

Fearfull opinions, which are positive assents unto Truths, yet raised upon such probable inducements only, that the soule is left with a suspicion, that the contrary may be true. They are *Simile.* like a man upon a weak planke in a great river, there he sits, and there he feares, because he knows not certainly how long he shall sit there.

Doubtings, which are the suspensions, or inhibitions (the holdings up) of the soule from any determinate inclinations one way or other: they are the pawsings of the minde.

Simile. As take a man in a journey, where he meets with two wayes, he lookes on this, and inclines it may be the right, and then he looks on that, and supposeth that it may be the right, and then he looks upon both, and makes a stand, and goes on in neither: So it is with the soule in doubtings (spiritually) there are two wayes before it, two objects, two works, to beleeve, or not to beleeve, and *arguments to incline to the one, and to the other, drawing into some equality of strength and weight; just like a paire of scales, answerably ballanced, so that both are at a stand, there is no turning either to the right hand or to the left. Therefore the School-men say well, that *Dubitatio est motus supra utramque partem contradictionis, cum formidine determinandi alteram partem ejus.*

* Dictated from the spirit, and from the flesh; from that, by way of perswasion; from this, by way of disswasion.

3 Things to be further observed.

That you may yet conceive this clearly, remember 1. In our mindes there are Assentings, which

which are the adherents of the understanding to truths knowne: And there are Dissentings, which are the bearings off from those truths. There the soule positively inclines, here it declines; there it puts out the hand, and here it keeps it in.

3 Doubtings propetly stand between them both; they are not plainly the one, nor plainly the other: If I may speak freely, I conceive them to have a twang of either; they are a *medium*, a middle thing, as your mixt colours are, which you cannot style directly white, or directly black.

The soul hath a desire to joyne unto Truth, it hath a desire to share in that goodnesse which it apprehends; yet it neither fastens nor yet rejects, but like the fish to the bait, it likes it, and is striking at it, but dares not, and swims about; or like a wave of the sea, (that is the Apostles comparison, *Jam.* 1. 6.) thrusting

Doubtings are staggerings. Rom. 4. 20. *Simile.*

to the shore, and yet drawing back; or like a Meteor hovering in the aire twixt up and downe. Such rowling, reeling actions of the soule are doubtings; they are a recoyling, adventuring. The soule sees reason of either side, to draw and with-draw, to give on, and give back. It sees Christ and the promises, knows the goodnesse and bounty in the one and the other, whereupon it is giving on upon them, and putting out the hand, but then instantly it checks it selfe, and is stayed with contrary arguments and feares; I may not be so bold, perhaps they belong not unto me.

So that the person is hanging betwixt hope and feare, I would, but I may not; I may, but I dare not; It is just with the soule as with those at Chesse, they set one a man, and think to take a King, but then presently they are checked, and draw him back againe; God, he is my Lord, and my

King, nay and yet he is not; He will doe me good, yet I feare he will not; He hath pardoned my sins, and yet I feare he hath not; He doth heare my prayer, yet I doubt he doth not; My estate is good and happy; nevertheleſſe I ſuſpect it is not.

Thus doth a man waver, and roule, and is like a man in the ungrounded places, he no ſooner plucks up one leg out of the dirt, but the other ſinks in; the ſoule is not determined one way or other. *Simile.*

3 One thing know more, that though the mind doth not pitch, or reſt unto a determinate action in ſpirituall doubtings, yet it ever inclines towards a determinate object: That is, though the doubting Chriſtian cannot come yet to quit thoſe uncertaine, and trembling, and ſhivering motions, and bring them to a ſtayednesſe, and poſitive fixing, yet his mind honeſt, it looks after Chriſt, and the promiſes; it doth not re- *Note.*

ject, nor doth it give up all hopes: it keepes in it two things, which Infidelity and Despaire want.

2. Things. 1. One is, that it prizeth Christ, and the promises, though it cannot claspe them.

2. Another is, that it gives not up the case as desperate, and impossible; but though it cannot fixe, yet it will be hovering about them.

Cap. II.

The kinds and diversities of them.

THe second thing respects the sorts of doubtings, and these I must also touch.

4. sorts of doubtings. I conjecture that there are four sorts of doubtings.

1 Some are of admiration: in these the minde doth not gainsay simply, no, it doth beleeve, and is only solicitous about the hidden manner, or way of performance, or accomplishment. Such a doubting

ing was that of the Virgin, Luke 1.34. *How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?* Non dubitat esse faciendum, sed quomodo fieri possit, inquirit, saith *Ambrose*. Luk. 1.34. Tom. 5. de Mariæ interrog.

2. Others are of confirmation: Where the soule beleeves, but desires something more to secure & settle it; so that it might be put out of all doubt, as was that of *Gideons*, *Judg.* 6.36, 37.39. which kinds of doubtings are the cravings of a little more indulgent security from God in matters of extraordinary concernment; not that we properly question the verity of him, but that (in respect of our selves) we might work the more confidently upon clearer evidence and warrant. Iud. 6. 36, 37.

3. A third sort are of negation: and this is such a forme of scrupling, wherein we plainly suspect God of his good word of truth; and is incident unto evill men in their generall course, and to good men in respect of some particular carriages, and businesses, as is evident

dent in *Zacharias*, Luke 1. 18. *Whereby shall I know this?* This question was a question of doubting, and this doubting, no question, was an unbeleeving one: It did not credit the Angels message; for it is expressed, *ver.* 20. *Thou shalt be dumbe, because thou beleevest not my words.*

Luk. 1. 18.

4 A fourth sort are of inquietation, where the minde is diversly carried, and is not come to a rest, as when a cause is not come to a sentence, but hangs in suspence. Now of this sort of doubtings we speake at this time, which againe may be branched:

1 Into *Reall*, which questions the principles themselves, either for truth or goodnesse, and so they respect matters of faith; or else they question actions touching lawfulnesse, or unlawfulnesse, and so they respect matters of fact: In which respects they are more specially stiled Scruples of Conscience, which are nothing else but some grating and painfull

full doubts about points * practicall: Of which see the Casuists. * As Rom. 14. 23.

2 Into *Personall*; where not the things in themselves, but in respect of our selves, are questioned, and only questioned, not peremptorily denied, or rejected, viz. I know, and believe that God is a Father, that Christ is a Redeemer, and the Saviour of sinners; I now doubt not, whether there be any truth, or good in these, (for these I yeeld) but upon view of my great sinfulnesse and many defects, I now only question (and this is enough) whether my interest be in that truth and goodnesse: What is said here of a case respecting Spirituals, the same may be said of that other respecting the promises for Temporals, because that doubtings doe extend to both. See Luke 12. 28.

3 Againe, there are two sorts of personall doubtings.

1. Some are private, which remove all presence of faith: of which see, 1 *Tim.* 2. 8. & *Jam.* 1. 6.

2. Some

2 Some are contrary, which do *impaire*, but not *negare*; they doe impaire, and keep faith low, but not wholly deny or extinguish it, as in our present Text.

Chap. III.

Of their possible consistence with Faith.

Quest. AND here lyes the kernell, Whether personall doubtings, (*i. e.*) doubtings of a mans particular interest in God, and Christ, and the promises, may consist with personall Faith?

Sol. To which I answer, They may: for (and mark it well) though

1 Doubtings be sinfull, for they are the smoakings of Corruption.

2 They be no part of Faith.

3 They cannot consist at the same instant with the acts of faith; for it is impossible that faith should formally doubt. *Simile.* As it is impossible that I should lay hand

on

on the rock, and not lay hand at the same time; or that mine eye should see, and not see the colour at the same time; or my hand receive, and not receive the gift at the same time: So is it impossible that the soule, when it doth beleeve, should doubt, forasmuch as faith in act, and doubt in act, are opposite, and the soule cannot possibly set out from one faculty at the same time opposite acts; I confesse successively it may, yet simultaneously it cannot: But now to beleeve, and to doubt, are opposite; for in the one I embrace, in the other I do not embrace; in the one I rest, in the other not, &c.

In sensu composito.

Yet fourthly, Actual doubtings may be in a person who hath habituall faith; for this you must know, that faith and doubtings are not opposed as life and death, where the presence of the one determinately concludes the totall absence of the other; but as cold and heat in remisse degrees in the subject, where though the nature

Actuall doubtings may consist with habituall faith.

of

of Gold, being not the nature of heat, but naturally one is expulsive of the other, yet both lodge in the same room; So Faith is not Doubting, and Doubting is not Faith; one of these is expulsive of the other, yet both may and doe meet in the same person.

How one is stiled a Beleever, yet hath doubtings. *Simile.*

Who is notwithstanding called a Beleever from the most eminent part: For, as we truly call many persons beautifull persons, though in some one or other limbe there may be some faulty incongruity in nature (because that which is better, still denominates, or gives the name) so we say that Christians are true beleevers, because they have faith really in their soules, notwithstanding many culpable doubtings, which they feele and expresse.

It were a folly indeed that men should think their fields had no Corne, because there are many filthy weeds; or that the heap hath no wheat, because much Chaffe; or the pile no Gold, be-

because much drosse; or the soule no *faith*, because many *doubtings*. I had almost said (let it goe, I thinke it is a truth) there is none had faith, but hath found his doubtings. Did you ever see a fire without smoak? Smoak is no part of the fire, yet it streames from that fuell, to which fire is put: So it is with faith, and doubtings, &c.

Nay see this truth put out of all doubt by severall instances in Scripture; let this of *Matth* 14.13. be the first. *O thou of little faith, (said Christ to Peter) wherefore didst thou doubt?* Where, though Christ did reprehend him for doubting, yet as he doth intimate his doubting, so his faith too; He had faith, though little, and doubtings, though he had that faith; there was the one, and there was the other, they were both in *Peter*; for he had not slept out but for faith, and he had not sunk, but for his doubtings.

Beleevers have doubted. *Peter.*

Observe *Abraham* himselfe; the *Abraham.*

Father

Father of the faithfull, yet we finde him winding and turning, shuffling and doubting more then once; if we read *Gen.* 12. and *Gen.* 15. 2, 3. and *Gen.* 20.

David. So *David* had his tremblings, his faintings, his suspicions; all in him was not faith; he in his haste fals out with some for *lyers*, who yet spake nothing but the truth of God: And so againe, in his haste, he is *cut off from before the eyes of God*, who yet *heard the voyce of his supplications.*

Psal. 116. 11. Psal. 31. 22 God hath forgotten me, &c.

Job. *Job* also, *a man of great sorrowes*, and of great faith, yet, had he not his qualmes? his shakings? his questionings? indeed in some places he seemes Heroicke in his faith, graciously victorious over all calamities, and riding above waves, yet in other places wee finde the Man, as well as the Believer, he staggers, he feares, he is giving up.

The faithfull in Scripture are compared oftentimes to Trees, which though they be well foo-

ted,

ted, yet may be ſhaken; and to *Noahs* Ark, which though it was a ſafe harboure, yet it was toſſed; and to an *houſe built upon a rock*, which though it be firme, and cannot be removed, yet it may be moved; and to *Starres*, which though they be heavenly, yet are twinckling; and amongſt them, moſt to the *Moon*, which with her light hath yet ſome dark ſpots.

What ſhould I alledge examples? let your owne experiences and daily complaints ſufficiently anſwer to this, for them give verdict: Some of you have not yet riſen above your feares. Let God hold up his favour, doe you not preſently doubt? Let him hold in his hand, doe you not alſo doubt? O how we toſſe, and rowle, and ſtagger in every ſenſible difficulty! In matters of this life, ſcarce a contrary occurrence which doth not diſtract us. Thus is it with moſt of us in our infancy, and in our ſettings out: But for you who are of further perfecti- Experiences.

on.

on, who are ripened unto an assurance, perhaps unto a full assurance, can you never remember any bowings, shakings, shiverings, doubtings? Or think you never to meet with any more? I have known the Sunne one day bright, and the next covered; and *Davids* mountaine strong: But, *Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled*, Psal. 30.

Besides all this, consider the nature and condition of true faith in this life; it must then be granted, that there may be doubtings with it, forasmuch as no grace is perfect in this life; it hath its contrary in the same subject in some remisse degree: And it is one worke of faith still to be casting out of doubts, which doe rise in the minde: which working could not be, unlesse there they were.

Object. But you will say, Whence should these arise? Doth God alter in his Love, in his Nature, in his Fidelity? Or doe the Promises

mises (which are the great stay of faith) goe and come, ebbe and flow? Doe they vary from themselves, either for truth or goodnesse? Or doth Christ the foundation, the rocke on which our faith is built, is not he the *same yesterday, to day, and for ever?* If so, how, why, whence is it that a Believer should doubt?

Sil.

I answer, That though there be the samenesse in God, in Christ, in the Word, yet there is not an oneneſſe in us; and the variations in us doe in no wise conclude any thing in them, no more then the severall alterations in the ayre doe inferre a diversity in the Sunne, which is one and the same in respect of it selfe, however the changes be multiplied here below. Therefore know, that the

Mris.

CAP.

CAP. IV.

Springs, Causes, and Occasions of doubting are, or may be these.

The first cause of doubtings Originall sinne: the fountaine of unbeleefe.

NAturall corruption: This is a corrupt root, the seed of all sin, and of unbeleefe. This is that *flesh* which *lusteth against the spirit*, and thrusts up abundance of motions, and corrupt reasonings, and motives to interrupt our faith in its great businesse of beleeving: So that when we would do good, evill is present with us; and when we would beleeve, unbeliefe is present with us.

It corrupts and misinformes the mind, and withholds the will.

It is very true, that in our conversion, the soule is graciously inlarged, and the powers of sin are crushed, yet so, that still we goe with a chaine about our leg; and though sinne hath its deaths-wound, yet so much life is still remaining, as to interrupt our Graces, to resist them; yea (and if wee looke not well unto it)

It is a disease hanging about the best.

Note.

to

to stay and binde them.

He who hath a maime in his leg, cannot move in that maner or measure as he desires; and a wounded hand or arme cannot stretch out it selfe, and lay hold at all times. Corruption is in the best, and will doe its part, and that is one reason why we cannot doe all our part in beleeving. *Simile.*

You know in the Waters, how the intensions and motions of one side are stopt, and kept up, by the malice, and subtilty, and power of the other; and that there may be many veines of sweetest water under the earth, which yet are many times checked, and controlled, by the falling downe of earth. O this body of sin, which (*volenti nolenti*) we must yet carry about with us, how backward is he to come to Christ? how unbeleeving is it? how suspicious? how fearfull? it will not be perswaded, it will not resolve, it will not credit, it will not yeeld, it will not imbrace. *Simile.*

The

The very Disciples, who had the presence of Christ, who saw the Miracles of Christ, who heard the voyce of Christ, how often did they doubt? did they questi-
Luk.24.21 on? *Whence shall we have bread to feed so many? We had trusted it should have been he who should have redeemed Israel.* So that Christ reproves them more then once, or twice, *O*
Luk.24.25 *slow of heart to beleeve, &c.* **Why doe*
* 38. *thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I my selfe:* But Christ apologiseth for them, *The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weake.*

A second cause of doubtings. *Simile.*

2 Imperfection of faith, this is another cause of doubting. Why should a childe fall so much, and a man so seldome? is it not the weaknesse in the Nerves, and Sinewes, and loco-motive parts? When fire is newly kindled, it is but little, and hath much smoak; so is it with our faith, the more imperfect it is, the more doubtings it finds.

Matth. 14. 31. *O thou of little faith,*

faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? Little faith, and great doubtings goe together; like a little heat, and great mists. Some men are but Babes in Christ, they are but plants in the Garden, they are but Lambs in the fold: Now children are apt to feare, and plants to shake, and Lambs to flag behind, and weake Beleevers to doubt; lay a little burden on a Childes shoulder, he knowes not what to doe; shew him the water, he cryes out: So is it with weake Beleevers; their strength is not proportioned unto unusuall exigences; neither have they experiences, nor that quicknesse of art to hye them to their helps.

Weake faith and many doubtings goe together.

Simile.

And these are great matters; 1. when a man wants strength to deal with his enemy, and 2. when he hath not had experience: Therefore let us consider this yet more, where faith is weake, or imperfect, there are three things incident unto those Beleevers.

1. They want abilitie to argue

Three things in weak beleevers.

for their experience is little, and therefore their judgements are not so setled, so that they cannot alwayes maintaine their ground.

David.

David, because of former experiences, he is not *amazed* at the uncircumcised Philistine, but *rests* upon that God for victory here, who had granted him *former* deliverances from the Beare and the Lion. And so *Paul* confirmes himselfe, 2 *Cor.* 1. 10. who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver, in whom we trust, that he will yet deliver: but weak faith hath little experience of Gods truths, and of Gods power, and of Gods method and times.

Paul. 2 Cor. 1.

David was right in *Psal.* 9. 10 *They that know thy name will put their trust in thee, for thou Lord hast not forsaken those that seek thee.*

2 They see their wants and hinderances, more then their helps and incouragements; like *Elisha's* servant, who saw the multitude of the enemies compassing the City, with Horses and Chariots, and thereupon cryed out, *Alas my Master, how shall we doe?* but (at first) he saw not the mountaine full of Horses, and

Elisha's servant, 2 King. 6. 15, 16, 17.

Chariots

Chariots of fire round about Elisha, which might have stayed and upheld him.

It is with new and weake Believers, as with the *Israelites*, who did heare of the sonnes of *Anak*, those mighty Gyants, and of the high and mighty walls about the Cities of *Canaan*, they looked on these, and were greatly perplexed, and discouraged, but they did not look on the strong and Almighty God, who did promise to goe with them, and conquer for them; So doe these, they looke upon the meere temptations and suggestions of Satan, they looke upon the powerfull stirrings of remaining corruption, they look upon the strength of present crosses, they looke upon their owne weaknesse against all these, they looke upon Gods delayings, upon their owne dulnesse, and whatsoever may keep them downe; but they look not upon that God who hath promised, who hath performed the Oath to *Abraham*, Israelites.

the father of the faithfull; they look not upon Christ, who hath by his blood ratified and sealed the Covenant; they look not upon that mighty spirit of Grace in them; they look not upon other standing Christians, who can tell them, that God is true in all his promises, and assuredly righteous, and a present help, and who never failes them that trust upon him, and wait.

3 They cannot repaire unto the establishments of faith as strong Beleevers can: They are not yet so acquainted with the Armory of faith; the Promises, they are the Armory of faith; but now these Promises are many, and are graciously framed to the variety of our conditions; which because the beginning Beleever knowes not, therefore in the times of changes, being not so ready, having not his weapons, nor being so presently able to send them out, hence it is that doubtings do so arise, yea and so grow

The Armory of faith.

upon

upon him in such strength, that he is like to faint.

You shall experimentally finde many good people, who have in some Cases maintained their ground with credit to their faith, (for they have traversed a particular veine of the Promises, they have found them out, they have applied them, and made use of them, by vertue of which they have borne downe the many risings of doubt and feare in that kind, and have singularly enabled and comforted their hearts against distrust and feare.) Note.

But these (I say) same persons on a sudden have been, and are strangely puzled, distressed, afraid, doubtfull, full of feares and dejections, and all that they can doe is to beare up, yea and that is hardly done to: Why, what is the matter? have they not faith? Yes; and doth not that faith work? Perhaps it doth in a generall way, but with particular efficacie they cannot yet observe it:

How so? This, there is a new kind of trouble, a new burden, which yet they were not put unto, and they cannot finde any promise to reach that same: and hence it is that their feares and doubtings do exceedingly sprout up, and distract them.

Till faith doth settle we shal be unsetled.

And this is found to be very true, that in particular and sensible distresses (be the matter and kinde what they may be) the soule remaines in a hurried perplexity, in a waving unsetledness, untill that faith can finde out a Promise to answer it, either expresly, or virtually; one of these two wayes it must reach us in our conditions, or else our feares are up.

The third cause of doubtings Joh. 20. 25.

3 The studying of the life of sense: This is another spring of doubting, which is evident in *Thomas*, *John* 20. 25. *Except I shall see in his hand the print of the nailes, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not beleeve*: He must see, and feele, or else he is faithlesse.

Now

Now to study the life of sense is this, viz. To place the disposition of God, and the issues of our condition in our feelings, and sensible apprehensions; As to beleeve that God is my God, because I finde him so; That he is gracious, because I finde a sensible answer of my prayers; That hee doth accept of my services, because I find that life of affection. So on the contrary, that he is not my God, because I finde not those sensible reports of his favour; I finde not that quickness, and former smartnesse of affections; I finde not present answers unto all my desires and requests; That I am not in the estate of Grace, because I feele not the vigours, and secret increasings of Grace; That I doe not beleeve, because I doe not rejoyce, nor see my sinnes blotted out, &c. The life of sense what it is. Three demonstrations that the life of sense causeth doubtings.

Which kind of life must verily be exposed unto infinite and continuall doubtings? For,

 tings.

A bowle upon a bowle, &c.

1 The soule here hath no constant bottome to settle upon; our feeling is sometimes more, sometimes lesse, sometimes none at all. Indeed it is true, that faith may breed feeling; but then it is as true, that faith may be without it: As the soule doth breed seeing and hearing in the eyes and eares, yet the soule may be in the man when these doe not see, and these doe not heare: A man cannot but be perplexed in his thoughts, if he holds this opinion; That meat doth not nourish him, unlesse he presently sees how the parts grow bigger by it; Or, that his father doth not love him, because he is not alwayes smoothing and stroking of him; Or, that his seed is lost, because it is not a present harvest; Or, that the channell will shortly be dry, and without water, because the Tide is gone out, and hath left it naked; in like manner, to conclude against our soules from Sensibles, and Mutables, exposeth it to the

Sense meets with contrarieties, & cannot resolve them: but faith can reconcile all by resting on God and his Word. (*David*, *Iob*, and *Paul*, &c.)

Conclusions can never be firme, which depend upon variable & changeable principles.

the labytinth of daily feares and scruples.

But secondly, the soule hereby doth advantage Satan in his suggestions; for the life of sense (like the rowling sea) is open to all winds, it hath a secret, restlesse, unquiet distemper of its owne; but besides that, it is open to the singular disturbances, and inquietations from the Devill: For the life of sense hath made two propositions for him of the despairing Syllogisme, and he can easily make the other, viz.

Note.

He who hath not the sense of Gods favour, present answers from God, feelings of his Graces in their nature, and measure, cannot be in the state of Grace and Salvation (this is the Maxime of sense) But thou (saith Satan) hast not the sense of Gods favour, &c. *Ergo*, saith he, Thou art not, *Ergo* also fayest thou, I am not in the state of Grace and Salvation.

The Syllogisme of sense.

Loe here the issues of the life of

sense? And now, no marvaile if the soule gives not on upon Christ, or the Promises, but is tossed to and fro, and hangs in extreame suspence.

Yet thirdly, it is a life which doth much dishonour God, and therefore exposed to many feares and unsettlednesse: What? To measure the truths of God by our feeling? and the graciousnesse of God by our sense? what is this but to arraigne God both for truth and graciousnesse? What is this but to set upon God, and give the sentence, which he hath kept in his owne hands? What is this, but to limit the holy One of *Israel*? yea, to correct his Wisdome, as not being skilfull to order the busineſse of our Salvation, unleſſe we alwayes have an eye, or a finger at every turn, to know his particular intentions, and proceedings with us?

God will not stoop to our unbeleeving way of sense, but we must rise to his gr:ning way of faith.

It is a glorious and singular way to beleeve so long, until we come downe to feeling: But to

Note. We know not what

begin

egin with feeling, and so rise to beleeving, is a delusion both danerous and impossible; for thou anst never truly feele, unlesse hou dost first beleeve: Canst thou uly warme thy heart with that Divine favour which faith did ot let in?

a promise will doe, till we lay hold.

A fourth cause of doubtings is, when we deny Faith its masterecause and grounds to worke: How is hat? It is, when we guide the whole businesse below, and not above; I will give you some instances.

The fourth doubtings. We give not faith its perfect work and full scope to all objects, and all occasions. Foure instances.

1 You know that the condition of Grace is exposed to many short allowances in externals, and the condition of sinfull men is capable of large prosperity in worldly things; A good man may have many wants, and an evill man may have, in this life, his good things, (as *Abraham* speakes of *Dives*.) Now when a person looks upon the bulk, upon the outward part, upon the shell, upon the rinde of things, and

Prosperity of evill men, and adversities of good.

and sees plenty with evil men, and poverty with good men; honour shining there, and contempt clouding here; fulnesse for them, and leanesse for these; pleasures and liberties attending them, and sorrowes and restraints befalling these; when I say, he lookes on this, and no higher then this, it is possible that suspicions and doubtings may start up; it is possible that the soule may sinke downe somewhat at it. See an evidence in Asaph, Psal. 73. 2. *My feet were almost gone, my steps had well-*
Psal. 73. 2. *nigh slipt.* 3. *When I saw the prosperity of the wicked.*
3. 12. *These are the ungodly who prosper in the world, they*
12. *increase in riches.* 13. *Verily, I have*
13. *cleansed my heart in vaine, and washed*
14. *my hands in innocency.* 14. *For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning.* Observe here his distrusts, and doubts; As if his gracious course did no way benefit him, or as if he had served God for nought.

And thus he goes on, whiles he bends

bends his thoughts downward, whiles he keepes in his faith; whiles he denied it matter to work upon; but *ver.* 17. there he gives scope for faith to worke, and then he is free againe, and well againe, [*Untill I went into the Sanctuary of God, then understood I their end.*] But 17.

2 In case of the sinfull condition; Whiles we look on it, and deny Faith its matter also to work upon, we shall be full of doubtings. Let a man look only upon his sins, upon the nature of them, the aggravations of them, what will come of it? 1. Strong humiliations, and those are good. 2. Doubtings and despaires, and those are bad. The single considerations of sin, are the matter only of our feare; they are a grievous burden: *David* was not able to stand under it, *My sins are too heavie a burden for me to beare*, Psal. 38. 4. Sinfull condition. Psal. 38. 4.

For what hope is there in our selves? What is in a sinner to uphold Nothing in a sinner to uphold a sinner.

hold a sinner? No burden is an ease to it selfe. Let people behold their sins, and not use their faith, they cannot but doubt; for now sinne appeares in all the motives and causes of feare, and now God appeares not in the nature of a friend, but with the countenance of an enemy, and of a severe Judge; and where now can the troubled soule anchor, or fasten, or ease it selfe?

God (you know) hath given unto Man two eares, and two eyes; if we make use of one only, our lives wil often hang in doubt & suspence, If we have not an eare * to heare what God saith to an humbled sinner, as well as an eare to heare what Conscience will say unto a sinner: If we have not an eye to looke unto Christ, as well as an eye to look unto our sinnes; an eye to behold the brazen Serpent, as well as an eye to behold the biting fiery Serpent, we cannot then but doubt: As we must give Conscience its scope to worke upon

*Psal. 81. 8 *I wil hear what God the Lord will speak, &c.*

upon sin, so we must give faith its scope to worke upon Christ, else we shall neither be freed from our doubtings, nor yet from our sins which cause those doubtings.

3 In case of bodily distractions and occurrences, which put us into an exigence or strait; if we looke below only, if wee looke upon their strength and our strength only, it will now be with us, as with *David* tired out, and almost spent by the huntings and pursuings of *Saul*, * *I shall one day surely fall by the hand of Saul*; or as with *Peter*, who looking upon the waves, (and not upon Christ) began to sink, and cryed, *Lord save me*; or as with *Jehoshaphat*, whiles he looked upon the great Armies, *We know not what to doe*. Not long since, we might have read this in our very faces, when the Churches abroad were in great distresse; we looked on their dust and ashes, their ruines and weaknesse

Bodily distractions.

David.

* 1 Sam. 27. 1.

Peter.

Mat. 14. 30.

Jehoshaphat.

2 Chron. 20, 12.

Our selves A little before the K. of Sweden came into Germany.

neſſe; we looked on man, and gave up all for loſt; We did not looke upon God, and therefore our ſhip was full of water, our hearts did faile us, doubts and feares, like a black Cloud did over-ſpread us: Nay, at * this very time we heare of an externally diſproportionable ſtrength, that the enemies are more in number, they are confederate; they complot, they intend a great deſigne, and now I finde the fears, the doubts wagging; and aſſuredly whiles we looke down-ward only, and not upward; whiles we lay events and iſſues upon the Creature; whiles we give faith no ſcope to looke up, and worke upon that God who can ſave by a few as well as by many, we ſhall never be freed from doubtings.

* This was preached in the times of the great calamities of the Church in *Germany*.

Whiles our eyes are down, our feares will up.

The very ſame is true in our perſonall occurrences; as long as we looke on the things only which we meet with, and oppoſe our own ſtrength unto them,

it

it will be with us as an house Simile.
without pillars, tottering with
every blast; or as with a ship
without an anchor, tossed with
every wave: For every crosse is
too hard for us, though none
can be too hard for God.

4 So for temptations; Here Tempta-
also our doubtings fly up, be- tions.
cause our faith flies not: O
say we, we are not able to beare,
to withstand, to overcome; the
temptations are strong, and ma-
ny, and daily. Suppose so; And
what do we? Verily we are soon
ready to sit downe, and to give
the day to Satan, never consider-
ring that God gives his Souldi-
ers his Armes, never considering
that the quarrel and battle is the
Lords, he is ingaged in the fight,
for all is for his sake: We think
that God looks on only, and be-
leeve not how much he curbs Sa-
tan, and sustains us; As if Satan
might doe what he pleased, and
God left us alone to grapple;
whereas the Lord makes manifest
his

2 Cor. 12. his power in our weakneſſe, and his grace is ſufficient for us, and
Rom. 16. he will bruiſe Satan ſhortly under our feet.

The fift cauſe of doubtings. A fifth cauſe of doubtings, may be particular and ſpeciall ſins after converſion:

Simile. Which are like water dropped into a candle, making it to burne flat and dull, with a black ſnuffe at the top, it catching as it were, going up and down for hold: or as a rheume, a falt rheum falls into the eyes, which intercepts the ſight, and darkens it for a time: ſo do our ſpeciall ſins after converſion, they do dim, and darken the ſoul, and like thoſe incloſed ſpirits of the aire in the bowels of the earth, they cauſe many fearful ſhakings and tremblings,

David. Pſal. 51. as is evident in *David* after his great ſins of Adultery and Murder, they did exceedingly weaken his ſpirituall condition, and wiped off all his comfortables.

Beloved, theſe ſins, they muſt needs be a ſtrong ſpring of doubtings,

ings, if we do but consider,

1 That it is their nature to set us off from the shoare & harbor; You know that a ship which lies quiet in the harbour, or by the shore, thrust it out, lanch it into the sea, it is tossed again: Now in all knowne sins which wound the conscience (after conversion) we loosen the Anchor, and put off; The Promises, and Christ, (upon which our confidences were anchored) doe now seem to give, they will leave, they will with-draw.

Foure things here about speciall sins.

Simile.

Speciall sinnes though they loose not the estate, yet they loose our hands.

But suppose, in their sensible vertue they should not, (which yet they doe) nevertheless we cannot fasten now, for the very temper of the soule is injured, our spirit is wounded. You know though the staffe doth stand where it did, and as it did, yet if my hand be wounded, I cannot claspe it, nor use it as formerly.

Simile.

Now what think you, must not the soule needs be filled with feares, and with doubts, which hath

hath thrust it selfe thus from such a gracious harbour as the mercies, the loving kindnesses, the sweet and blessed promises of God? may it not say now, as *David* once, *Psal. 77. 3. I remembred God, and was troubled?* and wel mayst thou be troubled, who wouldst for such a sin pull away thy hand from such a God.

Psal. 77. 3

2 God doth really take these sins ill, very ill, from those upon whom he hath conferred such fruits of his love. For this is a truth, that in case of offences, Love and Bounty can give in the strongest and heaviest aggravations: As in that of *David*, *2 Sam. 12. 7. I anointed thee King over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul: 8. And I gave thee thy masters house, and gave thee the house of Israel and Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things. 9. Wherefore hast thou despised the Commandement of the Lord to do evil in his sight, &c.*

God's goodnesse aggravates our sinning.

2 Sam. 12. 7. 8. 9.

Ob-

Obserue how the Lord pleads it, and aggravates it upon *David*. Now when a childe knowes that he hath committed a fault, (concerning which his father gave him a speciall charge, *See thou doe it not*) and withall hee knowes that his father is fully acquainted with all the business, it is likely (we finde it so) that feares and doubtings gather within the breast of the childe; He dares not keep off, and yet he is afraid to come in; he knowes that his father hath taken it ill at his hands. *Simile.*

So it is with us after our speciall sinnes, we know that God hates them, (he hates them not personally, but naturally, not because in such persons, but because in any persons) their nature is repugnant to his: (as we hate poyson for it selfe, and therefore let it be in a Toad, or in a Princes Cabin, we hate it still) and they now have fallne upon such sinnes, and have incensed a graci- *Note. Sin in any, hated of God.* *Simile.*

gracious Father, what notable fears, what strange misgivings, what appalings get up now upon the heart?

Where is my Father? (saith the offending childe) He is within, (saith one) away he runs; or he is abroad, and then down he sits, and weeps, and bewailes his losse, I shall never gaine his favour againe.

Thus it is with us after our speciall sins; If God seeme to draw towards us, we are ready to fly from him: *I heard thy voyce* (saith *Adam*) *and was afraid, and hid my selfe*: And if he doth not draw towards us, we sit down, wring our hands, and fetch many a deep Ah, Ah, what have I done! Ah me, What, where am I now? I have provoked my God, and am afraid to come unto him, &c.

3 God doth not easily open his favour unto those who thus abuse it: There was free intercourse twixt God and the soule before; but now the doore is shut,

shut, which before was open, and God himselfe will keep the key, so that nothing, no meanes or wayes shall open unto us, untill he doth please. You remember how *David* kept his distance from *Absalom* for his lewdnesse, he kept him off a long time, he might not see the *Kings* face: And *David* himselfe for his sinnes against his Father, could not (without long suings) see the face of God, as before, *Psal.* 51. *David* to *Absalom.* And God to *David.* *Psal.* 51.

And now think you it strange that the soule should doubt? Assuredly great debates delayed and prolonged doe cause great fears; yea, it breeds singular suspitions, May be I shall be still put off; *Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more?* *Psal.* 77. 7. Note. *Psal.* 77. 7

4 Nay, now the soule being made sensible, & having weighed all circumstances, can and doth teach it selfe many arguments and reasons to keep off; It is apt enough to fall upon it selfe, and Tender & wounded hearts apt to multiply exceptions against themselves.

to

to keep downe any readineſſe which it obſerves to give on upon God, or Chriſt.

It is ſome time before faith can finde a way to ingratiate this offending ſoule, and to eſpie a ſufficient *medium*, by and through which it may cloſe with God for pardon and favour: And when faith hath found it out, then our miſ-giving hearts beat us off; and as our weake children pluck down the Bird ſoaring up, with a ſtring, ſo doe our weak hearts pull in our faith, which is now ſpeeding towards heaven by the bloud of Jeſus Chriſt for us.

The more tenderneſſe we gaine of the ſins, the more ſhineſſe and feare growes on us, and ſeldome doth the ſoule recover its former hold, and ancient correſpondence and intimateneſſe with God, until there hath been a proportionable humiliation, and ſpaces of ſetled reformation: Twixt which, and the great diſco-

discovery of speciall, and renewed assurance, the heart meets with many a wave, with many a fad day, with many a fearfull rising, with many strong and terrible doubtings.

So then you see, that speciall sins after conversion, doe cause great doubtings in the soule, because they make a jar, a wound, they lay a bar twixt us and God, they keep up God, and keep down faith, and give up all the matters of disheartning and feare; they make the soule to be at a stand, to goe away from the gates of heaven many times with singular checks, and heavinesse.

A sixth cause of doubtings.

6 A sixth cause of doubtings may be indispositions unto, or about spirituall duties: when our Altar seems to have no fire, our bodies to have no soules, our affections to be estranged from our services; when we pray, but not with that fervency; when we heare, but not with that attentivenesse; when we set upon any

sort of duty, but not with that alacrity, with that joy, with those becoming spirits.

Nay, sometimes there is a strange listnesnesse, a kind of flat dulnesse, drowzinesse, that we hardly move upon our worke, much adoe to draw our selves unto duty. Like the Disciples, the soule is so heavie, that it can hardly watch, and pray.

Like the Disciples. It troubles a Captain when he cannot make his men come on, and fight.

Out of which kind of slumberings, the hearts of Christians doe ordinarily awake with doubtings, and that about two particulars especially.

Two places of doubtings hence.

1. One respects the verity and being of Grace. As Gideon in another case, (Judg. 6. 13.) *If the Lord be with us, why then is all this befalne us?* So here, if truth of Grace were in me, how should all these indispositions, dulnesses, deadnesses accompany me? Where the Spirit of Christ is, there is liberty, but I am as one chained up: Where Grace is truly kindled, there is a holy fire to

Note.

warme the heare in duty; *I have rejoyced in the way of thy testimonies,* (Psal. 119. 14.) *and with my whole heart have I sought thee*; so *David*, *Thy word was unto me the joy, and rejoycing of my heart, for I am called by thy name, O Lord of Hosts*, saith Jeremiah, Chap. 15. 16. And the Prophet *Esa*, chap. 56. 7. saith, *God will make his people joyfull in his house of Prayer*: And besides all this, we are commanded, to *serve the Lord with gladnesse*, Psa. 100. 2. Whereupon the soule misgives, How can my condition be good, which differs so much from the secret and lively dispositions of Grace? How can it be good which is so unanswerable to that quickneſſe promised, and found in the people of God? How can I be good, who about the actions of good am so dull, and heavie, awkeward, and slow? &c.

Psl. 119. 14 *David.* Jer. 15. 16. Esa. 56. 7. Psa. 100. 2.

2 But then, suppose the soule can cleare, and alloyle it selfe from this feare, (by knowing that fire may be where it doth not

alwayes flame, and the root may live where the branches doe not alwayes flourish, and by finding some answerable dulnesses in some eminent *Davids*, (who often have prayed for quickning) yet there ariseth another doubting from our dulnesse, and indisposition, which is a feare of acceptance; the Lord will not accept of these services, because they are so heavie, they are therefore without any efficacy. Suppose I may be good, yet they are bad, and can win no favour with God. Thus the soule is oft-times much perplexed by reason of its indispositions; as if either it were totally bad, or God intended little good unto it, because it is not quickned, and more enlivened in the services presented unto him. And verily it will much trouble a tender and sincere heart to observe in it selfe such flat and dull opinions of God, and Christ, and such an ineptitude in it selfe in doing that, which to do with the

the best of its strength, and might, and affections, it sees reasons, and hath desires thereto.

7 A seventh spring, or occasion of doubtings may be fruitlesse endeavours; I call them so, because we think them so: What is that? This it is, When we finde our defects in our particular graces, and in particular duties, or some effects of particular corruptions; and have gone to God by Prayer, & in his ordinances, so that we have a long time prayed for the filling up, and inlarging of our weake faith, love, sorrow, joy, assurance, and prayed against that hardnesse, passionatenesse, or whatsoever sinfulnesse observed in the heart: And yet we seeme to be still where we were, we creep on with the same impotencies in grace, and move on with the same burdens of sinfull motions and propensions: O now the soule sits downe with much sorrow, and with dolefull conclusions: Well, it is in vaine to seeke

A seventh cause of doubtings

any more. God will make that
Esa. 16.12 good to me which hee threatned unto *Moab*, Esa. 16. 12. *Hee shall come unto his Sanctuary, and shall not prevaile.* I have sought him a long time, and have not prevailed; I shall never rise above these risings: If God had a purpose to doe me good, I should have been sped ere this.

The opinion of successlesnesse must needs cause doubtings, because,

Three things in this. 1. God seems to have a controversie with the soul; surely, saith the heart, something is the matter that I cannot have audience, all is not right and even twixt God and me.

2. The very stays and supports of duty seem to fail us. You know, that the Promises are the great incouragements of all our services; and what have we to binde God but his owne Promises, by which he hath bound himselfe? He hath said, that he will *heare, and answer*; upon which assurance

of his, we came in, and prayed, but cannot get any thing, though we presse God upon his owne promise; Whereupon the soule is brought to a stand, If God will not answer his owne word, how shall he answer me?

3 Now we suspect not our petitions, but our persons, and uncomfortably judge or feare, that we have been deceived in our progresse towards heaven: God would be to us as to his, (a God hearing Prayers) if we had been to God as his, serving him with a perfect heart, for *God heareth not sinners*; Joh. 9. 31. But, *If any man be a worshipper of God, and doth his will, him he heareth.* Whereupon the soule strongly argues against it selfe, My heart is sinfull, or else my prayers had been successfull; I regard iniquity in my heart, therefore it is that the Lord heares me not, *Psal.* 66. 18. Joh. 9. 31. Psal. 66. 18.

Beloved, you who deale with observation and experience can acknowledge

Observe three things.

1. That there are spaces twixt our prayers and Gods answers: God hearkens what *David* speakes, and *David* must hearken what God will speake: Prayer is our Angle, our Seed, our Dove, our Messenger, it doth not alwayes take at first, it doth not returne us alwayes a present harvest, it comes in sooner, and sometimes later, it waits the time of the master.

2 God is wise in causing these spaces, he hath ends, singular ends both for his own glory, and for the good of our graces.

Simile.

But thirdly, corruption takes occasion hereby, and Satan vents his envious malice hereupon: As the back-biters, and slanderers, and contentious spirits, who love to set variance twixt faithfull friends, let the least occasion happen, a wry look, a mis-placed word, a mis-intended neglect, a forbearing of present dispatch in some desired service; let these fall out, presently the back-biter, envious,

vious, malicious, contentious spirit, catcheth; Loe, you see his love, his backwardnesse, his sleighting of you, &c.

Thus doe our corrupt hearts and Satan; Look you now, you see how needlesse, how fruitlesse all the care and service of God is; Alas, he thinkes not on you, he regards not your prayers: If he had loved you, if he intended to doe you good, could this bee? would he have held up after so many prayers, so many teares, so many importunities, so many pressings by his mercies, by his Christ, by his promises? No, no, thou art not in favour with God, his mercies, his promises belong not to ther, &c. Thus they.

Hence David why is the Lord so far from hearing? &c. Is his mercy clean gone? &c.

8 An eighth spring may bee, The imbecillity of judgement about the essentials of Salvation; and assuredly, here lyes the great spring of doubtings. An erroneous minde is the forge which hammers all our suspicions; it is the wombe which beares and

The eighth cause of doubtings.

breeds all our feares: if it doth not finde, yet it makes all more knots for us.

What one speakes of a plaine place of Scripture. This verse, said he, had been safe, had not Commentators made it so knotty; That we say of a Christians condition, It is gracious, happy, cleare, sure, did not erroneous judgements disturbe, and vex, and unsettle them. This is true, that weake judgement, and a tender conscience are seldome without feare and doubting. You see it in the *Romans*, about practicall matters, whereupon the Apostle Rom. 14. 1 presseth the stronger, *not to receive the weake to doubtfull disputations*; and if they had a particular faith, to keep it unto themselves, knowing well how weak judgements, like weake plants, are easily stirred and shaken.

You may see it also in the *Ephesians*, about doctrinall matters; for Paul giving an heart Eph. 4. 14. to them to *out-grow their childishnesse*,

nesse, Ephes. 4. 14. he doth Paraphrase it to be such an estate wherein men are tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind, &c.

Two things are incident unto shallow judgements (by vertue of which they are objected (with ease) unto doubtings.

Two things incident to this.

1 One is, they have not been conversant in the compasse of Truths, there be some Truths which yet they know not; they have not all their holds and strength.

2 New Doctrines contrary to old Truths, are not so easily over-mastered by their understandings, but doe either win misbeliefe, or else disturbe their true beliefe. You shall scarce heare any new things started, but withall we heare of many persons startled, as if their faith had hitherto been in vaine; for tender Consciences are apt to beleeve the most, and therefore sometimes do beleeve those points which are false.

A man must have good eyes to finde out cunning glosses.

Shall

Instances. Shall I give you instances amongst our selves? 1. One is an equality of humiliation before conversion: As if no man were truly converted, who hath not equalled the greatest Penitent in the highest degrees of contrition and terrour. And hence it is that many distressed, bowed, broken soules, doe exceedingly labour to grinde themselves, and to fall into the flames of horrible feares, thereby to assure themselves of a good estate: Whereas, 1. All Christians are not equall in their preparations. 2. No man can judge his estate at all, simply, by legall humiliation.

Simile. 2. A full assurance at first, or else no faith: As if *Jacobs* Ladder had no degrees, and the Sun at his first peeping were in the height of heaven; or that a Scholler must be placed in the upper forme, as soone as he enters the Schoole. Such inconsiderate deliveries as these, they trouble the faith of many (as the Apostle speakes of those

those in 2 *Tim.* 2. 18.) If faith cannot be without full assurance, then I am no Believer, saith *David*, for I had my faintings; Nor I, saith *Peter*, for Christ himselfe tells you, I had my doubtings.

It is a most vaine and dangerous way for any Divine or ordinary Christian to impose Rules, and to deliver a thing, as a dogmaticall and common truth, which he or he have in a speciall way only observed in themselves: The Spirit of God bestowes upon all the Elect of God, the same substantiall frame of Grace; but the making up, and the making out of these, is different: As, No man must say he hath no soule, because he feeles not those particular workings of reason and desire which another doth; So, No man must conclude another to be out of the estate of Grace, if, haply there be not a plenary answerablenesse in them both, for every method and measure of working grace.

Simile.

There-

An Item to the stronger Christians

Therefore let me caveat a little here, to you who are growne Christians: Remember that there are some who are weak, yet true members of the same body: and doe not you indiscreetly insist upon your only personall experiences, and those only in some particulars, in all companies, because you have (perhaps) risen high, therfore none are right, who are below you: Consult the Scriptures, and deliver us what it directs, and wherein it supports: You know not yet the aptnesse in tender Consciences to throw downe themselves, and to catch at matters and arguments of trouble. Thou sendest (perhaps) from thy company, a poore, a laden and troubled heart, with a bitter and amazed opinion, that it hath now no faith, which yet came unto thee with some weake and strong desires of former faith. Weak judgements (as I said before) cannot beare all things, but (like some meat Stomachs)

are

are presently oppressed with meats unusuall: And when we have mistaken an error for truth, it may prove to the soule, as the mistaking of poyson for Medicine, a businesse of troublesome and dangerous consequence.

A ninth cause of doubtings.

2 Ignorance of the Doctrine of Justification; this is another cause of doubting.

The Doctrine of Justification is a Doctrine of Life, *Rom.* 5. 18. *The free-gift came upon all men unto justification of life.* And it is a Doctrine of Peace, *Rom.* 5. 1. *Being justified by faith we have peace with God, &c.* And therefore the ignorance of it must needs be a cause of feare and doubting.

Rom. 5. 18.

Rom. 5. 1.

Poure things.

Here consider foure things.

1. The Christian condition is subiect to many sensible impressions: We are seldome without assault, or combat; and those pierce us most which the conscience throwes up. A man may beare any wound with more ease then that which he hath given himself.

Sensible guilt is troublesome, as a disease, when one is awakened.

himselfe. When the Law powerfully reveales, and the Conscience closely applyes the guilt of our nature and lives, now it is a sad and heavie time. *Job* cryes out in the sense of this sting, *Chap.* 13. 26. *Thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me to possesse the iniquities of my youth.* *Salomon* tells us, that the *wounded spirit* is hardly sustained, *Prov.* 18. 14. *David* is *even dried up* by his *roaring*, and *worne away* with the paine of it. And *Paul* cryes out as a man almost lost, *Rom.* 7.

Iob 13.26

Prov. 18. 14.

David.

Paul.

Something to answer & account for it.

Simile.

2. The soule makes out at such a time for some stay, and help: It seekes where it may lay his burden, and finde something to ease & deliver it. It is with a sick soul as with a sick body, which turnes from one side to another, from this part to the other part of the bed, and of the pillow, and craves help of this friend and of another, would have ease from any, but perchance can get none from all.

Here-

Here is ſinne, ſaith the perſon; here is a ſinfull ſoule, and there is a righteous Law broken, and a righteous God offended, who yet muſt and will be ſatisfied: He calls upon me, and hath arreſted my Conſcience: Now good Lord, what ſhall I doe? I have nothing to pay, or that can give ſatisfaction. *Where with ſhall I come before the Lord, and bow my ſelfe before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a yeare old? Will the Lord be pleaſed with thouſands of rams, or with ten thouſands of rivers of oyle? Shall I give my firſt borne for my tranſgreſſion? the fruit of my body for the ſinne of my ſoule?* q. d. Thoſe are nothing, thoſe can doe nothing; my ſins are many, great, deep; my righteouſneſſe is none, or too weake to anſwer for my unrighteouſneſſe: All the good I have, or can doe, cannot expiate the evill which I have done, or make up that good which I ſhould have. Here is ſome ſorrow, but Micha 6, 6, 7.

but what is that? it is but as a drop to the Ocean of guilt which lies upon me: Here is some duty, but what is that? it is defective in it selfe, and no amends to the many thousands of breaches which I have made.

Nothing in our selves.

3 The soule cannot stay it selfe upon it selfe: God calls for satisfaction; I have it not, saith the soule: God will have satisfaction: Lord! what shal I now doe? The Conscience workes upon us, and tels us, God is just, and if these sins be not pardoned, and a righteousnesse found and presented, we are lost. Now the soule is at a stand, seriously and sadly bethinks, What have I? Nothing but sin, yet sin cannot answer for sin: Perhaps some imperfect holinesse, but that cannot make up a perfect satisfaction.

O my brethren! our blouds and spirits must needs goe and come, when the arrest is upon us, and none appeares to bayle us: when the ship is split, and no rocke is neare

neare to save us: when the sentence of death is read against us, and none is at hand to pardon us: when the Avenger of bloud pursues us, and no City of refuge opens to shelter us: unrighteousnesse, unability, and Conscience and God meet, and none yet, nothing is yet found to answer for us, or to pacifie us.

4 Without us there is something able to stay us, of which the soule being ignorant, is still perplexed: it cannot conclude its feares, and scruples, and doubts.

Object. What is that?

Sol. I answer, Justification is the stay, and therefore the soule must needs be burdened, being unacquainted with it: As,

Three things. 1 Till we know where to lay down our sinfull burden, we must needs be troubled: If a perplexed soule could finde any to charge his debts upon, who would beare and answer for him, then it might have rest: Now Christ in justification takes our guilt upon him:

As

Philem. 18. As *Paul* said to *Philemon* concerning his servant *Onesimus*, *If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that upon mine account*: So saith Christ to the broken and laden sinner, If thou hast any guilt, and sinfull debts to be answered for unto God, put them upon mine account; If thou hast wronged my Father, I will make all even, looke for thy discharge and acquittance by me; for *I was made sinne for thee, that thou mightest bee made the righteousnesse of God in me*,

2 Cor. 5. 21. 2 Cor. 5. 21. and *God was in me*, 19. (*ver.* 19.) *reconciling the world unto himselfe, not imputing their trespasses*

1 Joh. 2. 1. *unto them*; And 1 *Joh.* 2. 1. *If any man sin, he hath an Advocate with the Father, &c.*

2 Till we know our justifying righteousnesse, we cannot but be troubled: That righteousnesse which justifies us, is not in us: No righteousnesse justifies, but that which is every way perfect and full, now this is in Christ, and not in us, *Rom.* 5. 19. *By the*

obe-

obedience of one, many shall be made Rom. 5. 19
righteous. When a sinner is to stand before God for acceptance and life, he stands not before him in his owne rags, but in the garment of his eldest Brother: Hee cannot say, Lord, here is a righteousnesse in me which hath fulfilled thy Law; here is a righteousnesse in me, against which thou canst make no exception: here is a righteousnesse in me, for which thou art to account, and pronounce me just: But this he may say, Lord, though I have no perfect righteousnesse to answer thee, yet thy Son hath for me, and he is made unto mee from thy self, my *righteousnesse, wisdome, sanctification,* and *redemption,* 1 Cor. 1. 30 1 Cor. 1. 30. And *being justified by faith* in it, he may have *peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ,* Rom. 5. 1.

Brethren, no man can be free from strong fears and doubts, who thinkes to be acquitted, or condemned by what is in himselfe:

selfe: If a man thinkes this, The Lord will, or doth enter into Judgement with me, and I finde nothing to satisfie him; all the powers of my heart, and of my graces are insufficient, and therefore there is now no hope but I shall be cast, and condemned; you see here is ground of doubting: yet if a man could looke out of himselfe, and know that his righteousnesse is to be found in Christ, and God hath appointed it so, that I am to be justified by that righteousnesse only; now the soule may have a stay to rest on: Yet my Saviours righteousnesse was perfect, was accepted, and he is mine, and his righteousnesse is mine.

3 Till we know the dispositions (if I may so speake) in God about our justifying, we cannot but doubt; for a man reasoneth thus: I have committed great sins, which now doe grieve me, and I hate them, and I have left them, but I know not how they

may

may be pardoned; those will now cause doubtings. Untill we know that God for Christ will justifie us from great sins, as well as small, 1 Cor. 6. 8. 9. and that he blots out the thicke cloud, as well as the cloud, Esa. 44. 22. *I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins*: and that there were expiatory sacrifices not only for infirmities, but also for enormities, all which typified the vertue of the blood of Christ, which justifies from great sins, &c.

1 Cor. 6. 8, 9, 10. Esa. 44. 22.

But I have nothing to move God to pardon them. *Object.*

Yet pardoning is a gracious work; God pardons sins, not for thy sake, but for his owne sake, Esa. 43. 25. *I, even I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and for his Christ sake*, Eph. 1. 7. *In whom only we have redemption, even the forgiveness of our sins.* *Sol.*

Esa. 43. 25. Eph. 1. 7.

But God will call me hereafter to account again, though for a while he seemes to be graciously pleased. *Object.*

No,

Sol. No, the Lord in his new Covenant of Grace assures the contrary, Jer. 31.34. *I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sinne no more.* So that you manifestly see, that the ignorance of our Justification deares the soule in great doubtings, because 1. A man knowes not where to cast his burden. 2. Where to finde his righteousnesse. 3. What is the certaine and fulnesse, and love, and graciousnesse, the fidelity and inviolablenesse of God in justifying a sinner by Christ.

A tenth cause of doubtings.

10 A tenth cause of doubtings, is disputation against the Promises: You have heard (Heretofore) that the ignorance of the Promises is an occasion of doubting; and now I am to shew you, that the arguing of the soule against them, is also another cause.

Object. But you will say, Doth any man dare so dispute against Gods Promises?

Sol. I answer, The Promises may be

be considered, 1. In respect of their absolute truth and goodnesse: Thus they are not disputed against, unlesse by Atheists, and positive unbeleevers, as were those scoffers, 2 *Pet.* 3. 4. who said, *Where is the promise of his coming?* The Promises considered two waies.

2 In respect of their application and extent: Thus many weak beleevers are subject to argue against them: Not, whether they be verity and mercy; not, whether righteousnesse and peace doe meet in them; but, whether these doe reach to them, and may bee applyed by them. Nay, that is not all, they doe oft-times upon unjust grounds, thrust away the Promises from themselves.

And now the soule must needs be hurried with feares and doubtings, in case the condition be sensible, because

1 The Promises are to faith as ground unto the Anchor; cast out an Anchor, and if it hath not ground to fasten, or hitch in, the Three reasons of it. *Simile.*

Ship rowls still: This is a truth; if faith cannot pitch and fix, the foule cannot be quiet and setled. *David* in one place useth the comparison of a Bird, that his *soule did hye unto God, as a bird unto her nest.* Whiles the bird is in the ayre, it is hovering, and flying, and restlesse; so is it with the soul, untill faith can settle it under the wings of a Promise.

Noahs Dove found no rest for the sole of her foot.

Nay, againe, the Promises are called *the breasts of consolation.* When the childe is hungry, and distempered, nothing quiets it but the breasts: And assuredly, if the Promises do not still the soul, nothing can.

Now when a man will rove from this ground of faith, when he will fly from his rest, when he refuseth the breasts of consolation, no marvaile if his soule be full of doubts and feares: For this is all one, as if a lame man should throw away his crutches, or a weak man his staffe, or a sick man his cordials, or a sinking man the

bough

bough which holds him up. The goodnesse of the Lord (promised to *David*) was that which did hold up all his faintings; and so all Gods people have still been held & staied up by Gods Word: and therefore that person must needs be full of doubts, who withdrawes his shoulder from such a stay and rock, upon which he should leane and rest himself. This is selfnesse, which is ever accompanied with unquietnesse; for why dost thou refuse to apply those Promises which God hath made? It is not because thou wouldest have more goodnesse first, but Lesse unbelief first. And is not this a self-fielding, yea in some sort a self-standing? What an odde and unseemly patchwork of worshipping of God is this? Lord, I have but weake graces; and thou hast promised to strengthen it, and perfect, and finish it, but I will not believe thy Promise belongs to me, untill I have first a greater

Psal. 27, 13

Note. So thou hast promised to pardon sins, &c.

increase of my grace. Or thus; Lord, I finde much unevenneſſe in duty, and thou haſt promiſed to give thy Spirit, which ſhall cauſe me to walke in thy way, but I will not beleeve this Promiſe, untill I be firſt more enabled in duty. Or thus, Lord, I find much ſinfulneſſe in me, and thou haſt promiſed to change and cleanſe the heart, and to ſubdue iniquity, but I will not beleeve this Promiſe, untill firſt I ſee my ſins ſubdued: When I find my graces increaſed, then I will beleeve that thou wilt increaſe them; when I finde my obedience continued, and my ſins ſubdued, then will I beleeve that thou wilt cauſe mee to walke, and wilt ſubdue ſins. *q. d.* if thou wilt performe thy Promiſe before I doe beleeve thy Promiſe, then I will beleeve thy Promiſe. This is as if a man would ſee the bloud in the veines, before the veines are opened; or waſh his hands cleane, before he hath turned the cock to let out the water.

When thou haſt done it, then I wil beleeve that thou wilt do it.

Simile.

3 A man is ſtill held by the powers of his corruption; and where corruptions, or wants are ſtill found in their former meaſure, there the tender ſoule will doubt and feare.

Let a man beſtow himſelfe much in hearing, or much in praying, or much in conferring, yet if he have the art of thruſting away the Promiſes, he will be ſtill as he was: *v. g.* Suppoſe a man to be ſick, call unto his help a Colledge of Phyſitians, let them conſult upon his eſtate, preſcribe the moſt fitting potions, and quickning cordials, and when the Patient hath heard them, he refuſeth their preſcriptions, he will not take them, but ſaith, Theſe belong not to me; will his diſeaſe at all abate? *Simile.*

So is it with us; when we hear, or read, or conferre, and many Promiſes fall in to our helpe, if yet we put them aſide, we now keep up our ſinfulneſſe, or weaknesſes, and therefore keepe up

our doubtings and distrusts.

Object. But you will say, all Promises are not applyable by all men in all conditions, and therefore good reason for us to hold off.

Sol. To which (briefly) thus much: Though all Promises cannot be applyed by all men at one time, yet some Promises may be applied by an humble and sensible sinner at some time or other. *v. g.*

Note. Suppose thou feele the power of sin stirring in its motions and workings, and (as Paul complaines) leading thee captive; though every Promise cannot now be applyed, yet thou dost ill in not fastning on the Promises of Mortification, which are made for this end, that the sensible and weary sinner should lay hold on them for the subduing of his sins.

Againe, suppose thou findest weaknesse of Grace, (that thou canst not doe the good that thou wouldst doe) dost thou now well to thrust away the Promises of assistance and strengthning, by say-

saying, What is that to me, if God hath said, *I will uphold*, and *I will strengthen*, and *My grace is sufficient*, and *My power shall be manifest in weakness*?

So againe, suppose thou feelest the guilt of sin, piercing and afflicting thy conscience, and God hath promised to pardon iniquities, transgressions, and sins, and to love freely, and to receive graciously, dost thou now well, or wisely, to thrust away the pardoning Promises, and say, What are they to such a one as I am? If any begger should say, What is that to me, that there are bountifull almes at the rich mans gate? Or a Malefactor, What is that to me, that the Prince will pardon Traitors? Or a sensible sinner, What is that to me, that Christ did dye for sinners, and God will be mercifull to returning sinners? &c.

11 An eleventh cause of doubtings may be the suspension of divine favour; when God holds up his countenance, the light of it

Eleventh cause of doubtings.

from shining into the heart, so that a Christian doth not enjoy his day as before, his God as before, in the sensible evidences of his loving favour, now the soule may (possibly) fall into singular distrusts and feares. See it in *David*, Psal. 30. 7. *Lord, by thy favour thou hast made my mountaine to stand strong; thou didst hide thy face and I was troubled.* A Christians life is in some respect, like a Courtiers, who is neare his Prince, upon his countenance or forbearance all his comforts or discomforts doe depend. We may say of him, what *Mary* spake, when she lost Christ, *Luke* 2. 48. *Behold, thy Father and I have sought thee sorrowing,* (*i.e.*,) with an heavie heart. So, &c. But.

Psal. 30. 7

Luk. 2. 48

Object. How appeares it that this suspension of divine favour should occasion our doubting?

Sol. Thus:

Foure things.

1 Gods favour is the greatest good; *Thy favour is life*, Psal. 30. 5 he there expresseth Gods favour

Psal. 30. 5

by

by that good which of us is most desirable: Nay, *Thy favour is better then life*, Psal. 63. 3. Therefore he cryes out, *Psal.* 36. 1. *O how excellent is thy loving kindnesse!* and prayes, *vers.* 10. *O continue thy loving kindnesse.* And *Psal.* 106. 4. *Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that thou beareſt unto thy people, 5. That I may see the good of thy chosen, &c.* Psal. 63. 3. 36. 7 10. 106. 4. 5.

Now the sensible good of the greatest good, must needs imprint the motions of greatest feare, and suspicion, and trouble, as you may see in *David*, Psal. 77. 3. 7. &c. *For now the glory seemes to be departed from Israel.*

2 Againe, In these times nothing can comfort the soule, or stay it without much difficulty: Our very graces will hardly uphold us. You know that if the King clouds his countenance, they are not the dignities conferred which will content us; they are not our revenews and possessions which will cheare us: So is it *Simile.*

with us, when God drawes up his loving countenance; they are not our riches, or our gifts, or our graces, or our services, which can delight us; these doe it, whiles in them we see Gods love shining towards us; but if that draw back, these are all put to a strait; All is nothing to *David*, whiles he is under this enquiry, *Will the Lord be favourable no more?* Psal. 77. 7.

Psal. 77. 7

3 God doth seldome draw up his favour, but for some unkindnesse on our part: Our sins (ordinarily) are the clouds, which hide his face from us; they are the wall of separation: perhaps some great sin, as *Davids*; perhaps some careleſſe eſteemes of him, ſpeaking in his Ordinances; perhaps some ſleight paſſing by of his ſecret motions and counſels; as the Church, *Cant.* 5. 2. *Open to me my ſiſter, my love, my dove, my undefiled, &c.* To which voyce of Chriſt, how doth the Church demeane her ſelfe? 3 *I have put off my coat, how ſhall I put it on?* At

Cant. 5. 2

3.

length,

length, though *verſ. 6. I opened to my Beloved, but my Beloved had withdrawne himſelfe, and was gone; my ſoule failed, &c.*

How can the ſoule but be greatly troubled, when it hath turned its day into night, and ſhut up that light, which once it injoyed, to its great comfort and ſolace? *Woman, why weepeſt thou?* (ſaid Chriſt to *Mary*, Joh. 20. 15.) *Becauſe* (ſaid ſhe) *they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him*: So may we juſtly weep, when our ſins have taken away our God from us, in his comfortable favour, and we cannot eaſily regaine him, and finde him.

4 Theſe times of ſuſpenſion, ordinarily are times of triall; wherein God leaves the Chriſtian to ſome notable combats, and to the great exerciſes of Graces; at which time, corruptions and tentations will ſtir, and therefore no marvaile, if they be times mixt with ſome feares and doubtings.

The twelfth cause of doubtings.

12 Another spring of doubtings is, the crediting of Satans testimony touching our estate; when we rest upon his judgement, and see our conditions through his informations.

You know that objects are diversly represented unto the eye: sometimes from themselves in their proper nature, as when a man sees a green colour as it is; sometimes mediately, by other things, as when a green colour is seen through a red glasse; now it doth not appeare in its native colour, but in the likenesse of that through which it is perceived: So is it with our spirituall estate.

Simile.

Sometimes it is represented unto us, as it is truly existing; and thus we shall see it, and judge of it by the VVord of God: And sometimes it is represented unto us, not as it is, but as it appeares in some corrupt and deceiveable testimonies, and reports unto us: As *Josephs* chastity appeared to his Master under the nature of abo-

Joseph.

minable

minable uncleanneſſe, when hee took the teſtimony of it from his filthy wife: So ſhall our moſt innocent and upright frame appear unto us to be nothing elſe but baſeſt hypocriſie, if we put the iſſue of it upon Satans informations: For as Satan hath an art to colour over the true condition of ſinfull bondage, keeping cloſe and in covert the proper image, or (rather) deformity of it: So he hath a deluſion too, in hiding from our eyes the true powers of gracious ſincerity, and fetching up to the judgement all our weakneſſes, and preſent imperfections, with all former known evils, with which he doth ſo totally poſſeſſe the minde, that it can hardly ſee any thing that good is in it ſelfe, or if it doth, yet it ſees ſo much corruption and imperfection, as that it is ready almoſt to turne the ſcale and ballance.

And here our crafty enemy ceaſeth not, but taking the advantage of a tender conſcience, he

he exaggerates upon us the large distance of this condition in which we now are, from that which God commands and expects, and hath found in some of his righteous servants; in the citation of whose piety he is not very sparing, that by the consideration of their fulnesse, and our owne emptinesse, we might the more easily suspect our condition, and credit his relations.

Which if we once doe, *Bone Deus!* into what labyrinths doe we wind our selves? into what fears? into what doubts? We shall never set out to believe any Promise, but he checks us backe with the hollownesse of our condition; we shall never set upon any ordinance or duty, but hee foyles us with suspicions (at least) that all is in vaine, God will not blesse and prosper his Ordinances unto such; and in those Ordinances, if any matter of bitternesse, or uncomfortablenesse be delivered, he brings home

that

that to us, and tels the soule, This is thy portion.

Now where our estate rests upon a deceitfull informer, where we take things, as Satan makes them, where we judge of sin, as he pleads it, and of Gods love to us, as he conveyes it, and of Gods Promises, as he interprets them to us, and of our owne Graces, and holy temper, as he cleares and evidenceth them unto us, there can be nothing but jealousies, feares, distractions, and daily doubtings in the heart.

13 Another spring may be some new risings of old sins after humiliation, and some singular assurance of their pardon. A thirteenth spring.

David gives a touch at this (I think) *Psal.* 25. 7. when he prayes, *Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions.* So doth *Job*, 13. 26. *Thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me possesse the iniquities of my youth.* Psal. 25. 7 Iob 13. 26

It would trouble us to see a man risen out of his Grave, (who hath *Simile.*

hath been buried a long time) and now to haunt us: So these sins which we have long since committed, and long since bewailed, and long since renounced, and after long humiliations their discharge hath been obtained; to meet these sins (like an enemy, with a sword in his hand) with guilt in their faces and countenances; againe, this will amaze the soule, it will appale it, and startle it, and make us more then once to sigh and inquire, VVhy is it so?

Two things. Two things will now fall into question:

1 The reality of pardon: where God saith, he *pardons sinne*, there he saith, that he will *remember it no more*; but it seemes hee doth remember it, (else how comes it thus upon me as a debt not yet discharged, as a guilt not yet removed?) and if hee doth thus remember it against me, I much feare, that as yet the Book is not crossed, this sin is not pardoned.

doned. Upon which, ſomething elſe may fall in; If this ſin be not pardoned, perhaps the reſt are not; and if this be riſen up againſt me, how can I tell but all the reſt may (afreſh) ſet themſelves in array, and give a ſecond charge upon my conſcience too?

2 The reality of Repentance: for where God cals for ſound repentance, (as *Eſay*, 1. 16. *Waſh you, make you cleane, put away the evill of your doings from before mine eyes, ceaſe to doe evill*) there God doth promiſe, (*verſ.* 18.) that *Though our ſins be as ſcarlet, yet they ſhall be white as ſnow; and though they be red like crimſon, yet they ſhall be as wooll*: in which words are expreſſed a plaine change of the ſinfull condition; our ſinnes ſhall not be what, and as once they were. Eſa. 1. 16 18.

Whereupon the ſoule miſgives for its part: God will doe what he hath promiſed, if I had done what I was injoyned. If my ſins had been truly left, they had been fully diſcharged; but now I poſ- Note.

ſeſſe

sesse them againe in their guilt; and therefore I exceedingly feare that I did overly discharge my selfe of them in my repentance. If Christ had slaine them by his bloud, or if I had drowned them by true sorrow and repentance, they could not thus revive in their guilt; but I feare that I did only skin over these sores, which I feele now to breake out, or that I laid them asleep only, and not dead, because they awake upon me with such terrour and clamor; and if so, then there hath been a long and fruitlesse veine of rotten hypocrisie in me; and whereas I had thought my work almost finished, I am as yet to begin againe.

Beloved, this is a secret and piercing fountain of strong feares and doubtings, especially when the sinnes rise up, and set on us afresh after a course of humiliation, and some singular assurance of their pardon; and yet it is the case of many Christians, incident

unto

unto them in their dayes of great losses, or sicknesses, or death.

14 Another spring or occasion may be some long silences in the conscience. A fourteenth cause.

God (you know) hath set in our selves, our Law-giver, our Judge, and our Witnesse; Conscience doth sustaine, and should discharge the offices of all these: In a doubtfull day it should clear our condition, and witnesse for us against the testimony of Satan, and of our own fears; and therefore God hath given unto it an excusing and comforting power, as you may see, *Rom.* 2. 15. *Their thoughts excusing one another, or accusing.* And 2 *Cor.* 1. 12. *Our rejoycing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, &c.*

Here consider some particulars:

1 Concerning Testimonie.

2 Concerning our Condition.

1 There

A three-fold testimony.

1 There is a three-fold testimony about our estate; 1 One is from the Spirit, which shines in the renewed heart by an unspeakable light, and manifests unto it the things given unto it of God, and so seals, and witnesseth the truth and goodnesse of our particular interests in God & Christ, according to the word of God. 2 Another is from faith, which doth testifie the interests of the soule in that happinesse which it findes revealed in the Word; for that which faith beleeves by a direct act in the Word, it may testifie of the same to the person by a reflexive * act. 3. A third is from Conscience, which beholding the simplicity and godly sincerity of the heart, testifies unto it (against all opposition) that this blessed frame is in the soule; and this testimony being concordant with that of the Word, the soule is thereby greatly sustained, forasmuch as this is knowne before, *viz.* A sincere temper

1 Cor. 2. 12

* By assurance.

temper is happy; and now Conſcience clearing that temper, the ſoule hereupon is much cheared.

2 Our condition falls under a three-fold conſideration.

1 Sometimes under the accuſations of Conſcience; Conſcience doth ſpeake and teſtifie, but it is either that our hearts are totally baſe, and ſinfull, and corrupt, or that in ſuch and ſuch a particular it is not right, it was not perfect, but ſinfull, and degenerating. A three-fold eſtate

2 Sometimes under the excuſations of Conſcience: where Conſcience teſtifies, and acquits, and ſpeakes peace, either about the frame of the heart, or rectitude of ſome particular action and courſe. As in *Paul, loc. cit.* As in *David* about *Saul.*

3 Sometimes under a neutrall act, or worke of the Conſcience: (1.) The Conſcience (like *Abſolom* to *Amnon*, 2 Sam. 13. 22) ſpeakes unto a perſon neither good nor bad: It doth not accuſe him, nor doth it excuſe him; it doth

doth not speak terrour, nor doth it speak peace; it doth not charge any speciall guilt, nor doth it give us a particular discharge of any.

Now this is the time of feares and doubts; I will shew you why, because,

1 A negative state satisfies not a tender Christian; it doth not satisfie a tender soule, that God lookes not like an enemy, unlesse also he lookes as a friend; or that Conscience doth not check, but that it should excuse. It doth trouble us many times, that in our exemptions from trouble, we yet finde no Peace-speaker.

2 It gives suspicion of a neutrall estate, because Conscience seemes to behave it selfe as a neutrall, neither against us, nor for us. I call that a neutrall estate, which is not eminently evill; it hath some good in it, and doth some good, but is not so good, as to be gracious, therefore the evill estate is a neutrall; it doth

not

not rise to be so bad as the worst, nor to be so good as the best people are. Now this estate (absolutely considered) is bad, it is an evill estate, it is an estate in which if a man lives and dyes (and goes not beyond it) he cannot be saved.

3 It may breed an expectation of the worse testimony of Conscience; for with-drawments are (sometimes) the fore-runners of some bitter intentions: it fell out ill with *Saul*, when God with-drew himselfe from him: So when Conscience with-drawes, perhaps my Conscience hath found matter against me, and as it doth not now speake peace, so (perhaps) shortly it may speake bitter things unto me.

4 Nay, Conscience is Gods Vice-gerent, it is his Deputy, and therefore in the silences and with-drawments of it, we looke through, and feare the disposition of God himselfe towards us, because the servants doe ordinarily expresse

expresse the conceits, and inclinations, and affections of their masters; and this is certaine, that we doe in an angry conscience behold alwayes an angry God, and so in a cheerfull conscience a gracious God, and so shall we in a silent conscience suspect a doubtful God: We doe ordinarily judge how God is towards us by what we finde and feele Conscience to be towards us: This is the glasse in which wee see his favours or frownes.

Conscience is the looking-glasse.

These are the springs of doubtings, which I have enlarged in their opening unto you; it is likely there may bee more then these, (I could also deliver you more about the temporall estate; but that is out of our scope and compasse now:) It now remaines that I descend to the closing up of these springs, to the cures and remedies of these Doubtings, which is the last thing proposed.

CAP.

Chap. V.

The Cures and remedies of doubtings.

HEre lies our next and greateſt work, and therefore as Phyſitians in this part are more cautelous to adminiſter things which are in their qualities moſt proper, and in their meaſures moſt convenient; ſo muſt we in the healings and cloſings of the ſpirituall diſtempers of the ſoule: And therefore that this worke may be happily performed, I ſhall (deſiring Gods grace to aſſiſt and bleſſe) preſcribe unto you, 1 The particular cures which ſhall anſwer all thoſe particular ſprings of doubtings before mentioned. Then 2 The generall Cures and Remedies which may extend to the help of all, or moſt of our doubtings, if time and leaſure hold out.

Two ſorts of cures, Particular, Generall.

The particular Cures.

The first cure, answering the first cause of doubtings.

1 Naturall corruption was the first spring of Doubtings, and Mortification is the first help and remedy: That is the Disease, and this is the Cure. I may say that of our faith, which the Apostle

Rom. 8. 13 speakes of our persons, *Rom.* 8. 13. *If yee through the Spirit doe mortifie the deeds of the body, yee shall live.* The more our sins doe dye in us, the more our faith will live in us. We

Simile. are diseased men (take us in our best condition) and you know the more any disease doth lose of its strength, the more doth our health rise up and thrive; and so we are as a garden which hath many plants, and severall weeds, the abating of these, the rooting up, and killing of these, contributes the greater reliefe and strengthning to our plants.

Heb. 10. 22 The Apostle (*Heb.* 10. 22.) would have them to *draw neare with a true heart in full assurance of faith*: he would have them to cast out

out their doubtings in their approaches unto God, he would have them to come with assurance, with a full assurance; to come so, as verily to be perswaded of Gods acceptation of them; not indifferently to come with, May be I shall be accepted, may be I shall not; this is a doubtfull approaching. But what doth he adjoyne to this exhortation? Observe the next words, *Having your hearts sprinkled from an evill conscience. q. d.* As long as your hearts are evill, as long as Conscience can charge you for entertained evill, you will be wavering and doubtfull; but if your hearts were sprinkled, if the evill of sin were washed from them, then you might come with a full assurance of faith (*i.e.*) Then faith might perswade you to come confidently unto God, for Faith cannot well perswade, if Conscience can yet truly charge and condemne.

Therefore saith St. *John*, *If our hearts condemne us not, then have we* 1 Joh. 3. 21

confidence towards God. (*i.*) If sinne be mortified, if Conscience findes no sin harboured, but condemned, if it cannot condemne us for not condemning our sinnes; then we have confidence towards God. (*i.e.*) Then if we come to God in prayer, and aske any thing of him in the Name of Christ, Faith may confidently rest upon it, that God doth heare, and will answer. *Whatsoever wee aske, we receive of him,* ver. 22.

22.

There are two effects of our sinnes.

Psal. 40. 12 Two effects of sin.

1 They keep downe our faith. *I am so troubled* (saith *David*) *that I cannot looke up.* See the place, *Psal.* 40. 12. *Innumerable evils have compassed me about; Mine iniquities have taken hold on me, so that I am not able to looke up; They are more then the haires of my head, therefore my heart faileth me.* You see here that his sins made his heart to faile, to misgive it selfe; and like an heavie rheume they fell on his eyes, that he could not well looke up.

They

They are a hinderance to faith, our naturall inclination is a very clog unto the ſpirit of faith; and when faith would doe ſome good for us, it ever (like a malicious perſon) throwes in doubts and ſcruples, and breeds with-holding arguments, and reaſonings againſt the Truths and Promiſes of God.

2 They make the incouragements of faith to be difficult; they keep off the things, which would edge & quicken our faith. As *Peter* ſaid in another caſe, *Depart from me Lord, for I am a ſinfull man*; So the heart here, God is, or will depart from me, becauſe I am ſuch a ſinner; he will not heare my prayer, becauſe of my ſins; nor be gracious to me, becauſe of my ſinnes; nor may I pitch upon his Promiſes, becauſe of my ſins. By contrary reaſonings and denials.

Now conſider, if that which did keep down faith in reſpect of its proper inclination (for faith naturally bends upward) and in

respect of its operation, that it cannot exercise it selfe without interruption, were removed; would not faith be higher? If the chaine and bolts were off, if the rheume were dryed, should we not looke better? Againe, If the incouragements of faith were kept close to faith, if faith could not see them, and dwell upon them, would not our doubtings sinke? Therefore it is more then evident that our doubtings would sinke, if our natural corruption did sink, if our sinfull lusts did sink, which doe breed those indispositions, those interruptions, those continuall difficulties unto our faith. Faith would rise, if its contrary did abate. *Cast out this bond-woman and her sonne,* (said *Sarah* to *Abraham*) *for the sonne of this bond-woman shall not be heire with my sonne*; So say I, cast out this bond-woman and her sonne, cast out naturall corruption and infidelity, that *Isaac* may be alone, that faith may be (as much as may be) alone,

Gen. 21. 10.

and

and then it will poſſeſſe the Promiſes (and the ſoule too) with more quietneſſe.

But here the ſoule replyes, No queſtion but doubtings would ſinke, if ſinfull corruption did fall; If the fountaine did decay, the ſtreams would leſſen; but alas, 1. Who can mortifie his ſinfull nature? 2 What kind of mortifying of it is requiſite? 3 What way may be taken to effect it? Object.

I will briefly ſay ſomething to each of theſe demands: Sol.

1 To the firſt, Who can mortifie his ſinfull nature? I anſwer, Of himſelfe, no man can; naturally he hath neither will nor power thereto: But as *Chryſoſtome* ſpake in the buſineſſe of Repentance, Thou canſt not turne thee, but yet thy God can turne thee; That I ſay here in the buſineſſe of mortifying, Thou canſt not mortifie thy ſins, but God can doe it: He can doe it for thee, though thou canſt not doe it for thy ſelfe, *Tu non potes, ſed Dominus tuus poteſt.*

though thy naturall corruption be a ſpreading Leproſie, he can heale it; though it be a violent Plague, he can cure it: God hath put enough in Chriſt to ſave a ſinner, and therefore enough to heale a ſinner. Remember one thing, In all commands, the duty is thine, and the power is Gods; he who commands thee to mortifie ſin, is ready enough with ſufficient power to effect it, if he be ſought unto.

Nevertheles obſerve by the way, that Mortification may be effected two wayes; 1 Paſſively, as when the Lord doth infuſe holy principles of Grace, which are contrary in their nature and vertue to the nature and power of ſin, working out ſinfull corruption by degrees. 2 Actively, as when the renewed and converted ſoul doth by faith ſucceſſively apply, and draw downe the crucifying vertues of Jeſus Chriſt; though the meere Naturall man can doe nothing to the mortification of

ſin,

sin, yet the renewed person having received grace from God, is by the help of Gods Spirit to stir up the grace that is in him, and especially his faith, to trust on Jesus Christ for the further subduings and crucifyings of his sinfull nature.

2 But now for the second demand, What kind of Mortification is most requisite, so as in more measure to free the heart from doubtings? In a word, this; be sure the mortifying be

1 Radicall, lay the axe to the root: As all Graces thrive most, when their springs are quickned, so all sins decay most, when their roots are mortified. Corrupt acts will fall quickly, if a corrupt heart were more sanctified. The strength of sin is inward, there are the strong holds which need most to be cast downe: By all meanes set up a crucified Christ in thy bosome.

2 Impartiall; It is true, one sin may trouble more then ano-

ther, but it will be thy wisdome to trouble all sin: Sins are chained together as well as Graces; and one sin serves to helpe another, and the neglected sinne may perhaps suddenly wound thee, and make thee to stagger. The whole body of sin in every member of it, must be the object of thy mortifying work: This will testifie the truth of Grace received, and the sincerity of thy conscience, and consequently will remove many bottomes of feares and doubtings.

3 Diurnall; (*i.*) a daily work, Perhaps sometimes thou art fervent in the work, (when conscience is struck, or when afflictions strike thee) but afterwards thou art negligent, and then sinne gets strength againe. But as thou should'st live by faith daily, so thou shouldest dye to sin daily; Watch thy spirit, resist the motion of it, insist on divine promises, implead the strength of Christ every day: Thou shouldest so beleeve

leeve still, as if thou never yet hadst enough of Christ; and so live still, as if thou were to live thy last; and so mortifie sin still, as thou didst at the first time wherein God looked on thee.

4 Speciall. If thou wouldst make thy battell strong in any part, doe it then against Infidelity, and whatsoever upholds and contributes unto it. It is granted, that the Radicall principle of thy doubts is originall sin: but then the immediate principle of it is remaining Infidelity. Out of it immediately come all thy staggerings, and reelings, and questionings, and doubtings: That is it, (O weak beleever) which disables thy apprehension of the Covenant, of Christ, of the Promises, of thy Title: That is it which perverts thy judgement, and mis-perswades it with cunning reasonings, so that either thou canst not discerne the full truth of Gods Promises, or thou canst not see prevailing reasons to per-

perſwade thy ſelfe that they belong to thee.

Therefore let the maine care and work of thee be, to ſtrike at unbeliefe: Be humbled much for it, beſeech the Lord to cure thee more and more of it, to remove the ignorance of the Covenant out of thee, and to caſt down carnall and proud reaſonings, which give the lye to the way of Gods free and full Grace, which would have thee to be firſt, and of thy ſelfe, that which thou canſt never be without Chriſt: and to doe and bring that, which God never impoſed on thee to doe or to bring, but hath told thee plainely, the working of it in thee belongs only to himſelfe, and he is alſo really and graciouſly willing to beſtow upon thee.

3 As for the third demand, What way thou mayſt take for the mortifying of all this ſinne; I anſwer,

1 Generally, touching all of it, Doe but inſiſt in the wayes on which

which already thou art faine; Did any vertue in the death of Christ (laid hold on by faith) did that heretofore helpe against sinne? It will doe so still: Did any love of God help thee the more to hate sin? It will doe so still: Did any assurance of a reconciled God in Christ, freely and abundantly pardoning of thee, weaken sin in thee? It will doe so still: Did solemne confessions of sinne, selfe-judgings, speciall mournings, sufficiently helpe thee with conquest of sins? They will doe so still: Did the humble application of thy selfe to the Ordinances of Jesus Christ (through which he is pleased to reveale his arme) confer any strength against thy sins? It will help still: Did any holy feare, any tendernesse in Conscience, any declining of occasions? Did vehement wrastlings with God in prayer? Did serious meditation and consideration? Did close society with the Saints? Did studies of farther holi-

holinesse? Did frequent reviewings of thy condition, and renewings of Covenant with thy God in his strength? Did holy watchings? Did resistings of the first births of sin? Did these, any of these, all of these, or any other spirituall course besides these, cause thy sinfulnesse to be vile unto thee, to be abhorred by thee, to be cast downe in thy judgement, to be cast out in thy affections, to be cast off in thy life? Goe on with these, & sin wil then be more and more mortified, & doubts wil be more and more weakned: the more that thy conscience is thus sprinkled from dead works, the more shalt thou be able to draw neare unto God in assurance of faith.

2 Particularly, for the mortifying of remaining Infidelity, doe three things:

1 Study exactly the Covenant of Grace, in the Author of it, foundation of it, matters contained in it, and all the adjuncts and

termes

termes of graciousnesse, sutable-nesse, fulnesse, faithfulnesse, &c. appertaining to it.

2 Study Jesus Christ throughly, know him distinctly as a Mediator, and offices, and effects, and workes.

Then 3. To much meditation in these, abound in Prayer, that God in particular would cause thee by faith to set thy seale unto them: But more of this will follow in answering some other causes of doubtings.

2 The second spring was weaknesse and imperfection in faith: The cure and remedy of which is, to perfect and strengthen faith; put more strength, more growth, more ripenesse into faith, and your doubtings will be lesse. The more purely the fire burnes, the lesse smoke it hath; and when the light and heat of the Sun is greatest, then the clouds and misty vapours are fewest. *Simile.*

Faith and Doubtings are like a paire of scales, where the weight

of

of the one beares away the other. The Disciples I remember prayed, *Lord, increase our faith*; and so did hee of whom you heard in Mark 9. *Lord, help my unbelief.*

Mar 9. 24.

Object. You will say, No man can deny, that if his faith had more strength, then his heart should have lesse doubting; but how may that be done? How may faith be strengthened?

Sol. I answer;

1 God who gave faith can strengthen it, for every grace depends upon him, not only for birth, but also for complement; his strength must lead us on from strength to strength, from faith to faith; he who is the Author, is also the finisher of it: And therefore if thou wouldst have a strong faith, thou shouldst go to a strong God, and beg of him, *Lord increase my faith*; my knowledge is dim, lighten that candle, open mine eyes yet more, that I may see thy truths; My assents many times shaking, but do thou establish and con-

confirme my heart in thy truths; my embracings, applications, very trembling, and broken, and interrupted, but do thou guide mine eye to look upon my Saviour, do thou guide my hand to lay hold on him, doe thou enable my wil and affections to embrace all the goodneſſe of thy ſelfe, of thy Chriſt, of thy Word.

Doe thou perſwade me, and I ſhall be perſwaded

It is Gods method to lay in (at the firſt) weak faith, that we might beg for more faith, and give him the honour of all. Had we it ſtrong at firſt, he ſhould not heare of us; but he diſpenſeth it by degrees, that in all our gettings, and in all our victories over doubtings, &c. his ſtrength may have the glory. Therefore goe to God, and ſay, Lord, I would have more faith, thou wouldſt have me to perfect it, but all perfection is in thee, and I cannot by my meere ſtrength ripen what thou giveſt, but thou canſt water what thou planteſt; though it bee ſowne a weake

body,

body, yet thou canst make it rise a strong body; though faith at first be but as a graine of mustard-seed, yet thou canst cause it to blossome, and to spread it selfe into a high measure; therefore thou who alone canst doe it, doe it for thy weak servant: Thou must take charge of thine own graces, and if thou giveſt my faith more strength, my beleeving will bring thee in the more glory, &c.

2 Thy studying of Christ and the Promises more, will bring more strength and perfection to faith. It is with the Christian as to is with the Schollar; let the Schollar study more the objects of knowledge, and then his knowledge will grow to be more large; So let the Christian study more the matters of faith, and his faith will rise to be more full.

Simile.

Hence the Apostle prayes that the Ephesians, *Chap.* 3. 19. *might know the love of Christ, that they might be filled with all the faithfulnesse of God*; and ver. 17. *That Christ might dwell*

Ephes. 3. 19

17.

dwell in their hearts by faith, that so they might be able, ver. 18. *to comprehend with all Saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height.* 18.

What the Prophet spake of perishing, we may say of fainting, and doubting, *My people doubt for want of knowledge.* Did we know the nature of our Redeemer more, how holy, and compassionate, and helpfull it is; did we know the offices of our Saviour, how absolute they are in removing our guilt, in conquering our corruptions, in making way for us to the Father, in speeding our suits and requests; did we know how fully he stands for us, he dyed for us, he intreedes for us, how willing he is yet to be more applyed by us, and possessed of us, we would beleeve more, and doubt lesse. What the Psalmist speakes of God, that same is true of Christ, *They that know thy name will put their trust in thee.* Hos. 4. 6. Psal. 9. 10.

Yet take a caution in thy studying

ing of Christ, study him as God reveales him, otherwise thy doubts will stick upon thee; If a man studieth his sins in his owne way, in a naturall way, he shall neither rightly see them, nor yet be freed from them: So if men study Christ their owne way, if they will have him to be such a one as their feareful hearts would make him to be, and not such a Saviour as God hath manifested him to be, then not conceiving of Christ as he is, they shall be & remaine still as they were.

Note.

A mighty Saviour and gracious.

3 Be in the wayes of strength. There are wayes in which God doth reveale his arme; his arme is that which doth strengthen us, and his arme is revealed in his ordinances; for God doth not call us, nor change us, nor strengthen us, nor save us without meanes.

He who is too good for the Ordinances, will ever be too weak in his faith. A childe which cannot stand when it is borne, may yet goe by the use of the breasts;

Note.

but

but that perſon who is weak, and wants ſtrength, if he feeds not, will abate more, and ere long want life it ſelfe. This is a truth, A new Chriſtian is ſometimes full, and a full Chriſtian is alwayes weak; for our ſpiritnall life is like unto our naturall life, both of which are within us, yet neither of them doe riſe, but from ſomething without us.

Spiritnall life like the naturall.

What the impotent perſon ſpake, *Joh.* 5. 11. *He that made mee whole, the ſame ſaid unto me, Take up thy bed and walke*; that we affirme of Gods Ordinances, thoſe his meanes which made us good, can make us better; they made us live, and they can make us walke; they gave faith, they brought the hand which did ſet the plant, and they can enlarge faith, they bring the ſhowres which doe water that plant:

Ioh. 5. 11.

For 1 They evidence Chriſt more, and open and unfold the Promiſes (which are the ſtayes of our faith) more.

2 They

God can answer that in one Sermon, which hath troubled us more then one veare.

2 They enervate, or weaken, and scatter the grounds of our feares and doubtings, and exceedingly suppresse the reasonings and powers of unbeliefe.

3 They cleare the understanding, and so keep open the way for faith to God and Christ.

4 They doe instill a secret and drawing vertue, they doe excite, and quicken, and perswade, *Ergo.*

Fourthly, let faith know its priviledges, and then it wil grow more strong: Faith would doe more, if it did know all that it might doe; assuredly we should have more confidence, did wee know our royalties.

Beleevers are more to God then the most immediate servants are to a Prince; all the Subjects of a Prince have some priviledges, yet theirs are greatest, who are in nearest service; now none nearer to God then Beleevers; see 1 *Pet.* 2. 9. *Yee are a chosen generation, a royall Priest-hood, an holy Nation, a*

pecu-

peculiar people; Nay, 2 *Cor.* 6. 18. *Ye shall be my sonnes and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty*; and these have those priviledges which the servants have not. They who descended from the bloud of *Abraham*, had more priviledges then others, and have not they greater, who come from the bloud of Christ? The Priests of the Law had singular exemptions, and Kings of all men are most highly priviledged; doe you think Beleevers come short, who are not profane, nor civill, nor typicall Priests, but royall Priests? who are not Priests only, nor Kings only, but both Kings and Priests, a royall Priest-hood? who are a holy Nation, a peculiar people, (*i. e.*) a people of treasure, such by whom only God gets something?

O, say many weak Beleevers, The Lord doth not respect nor love us. *Object.*

No? Doth not God love those, whom (out of his meere love) he *Sol.*

he hath choſen? Doth not God reſpect the diſcent, and generation of Chriſt? thoſe who come of his blou d? They who come from Chriſt, and are borne of God, are ſurely beloved of God.

Object. But in the world all men diſcountenance us, and regard us not.

Sol. Yee are Kings in Gods account, yee have the royall oyntment, even the Spirit of Grace; the royall garment, even the righteouſneſſe of Chriſt; the royall attendance, even the Angels of God miniſtring unto you. You have a Kingdome which conſiſts in righteouſneſſe, and peace, and joy, *Rom.* 14. 17. Cannot this ſtir up faith?

Object. Wee are oft-times afraid to come before God, we feare acceſſe.

Sol. Are ye not Beleevers? And are not Beleevers the Prieſts of God? And are not Prieſts priviledged by their calling to come before God? *The Prieſts might enter in, when none elſe might.* And is not

Jeſus

Jeſus Chriſt the Altar, upon which we tender all our ſacrifices and ſervices to God? and is it not the Altar that Sanctifies the gift? *Matth.* 23. 19. The Apoſtle ſaith, *Gal.* 5. 1. that *Chriſt hath gotten us a liberty*; and *Epheſ.* 2. 13. that *we are made nigh by the bloud of Chriſt*; and *Heb.* 10. 19. that *we may have boldneſſe to enter into the holieſt by the bloud of Jeſus.* Mat. 23. 19 Gal. 5. 1. Eph. 2. 13 Heb. 10. 19

If therefore wee did once throughly know what priviledges the firſt-borne have, the Sons of God have, the Generation of Chriſt have, the Prieſts of God have, the purchaſed by Chriſt have; if we knew the grants of favour, and free acceſſes, and ſingular acceptances with God, in and through Chriſt, O how might we keep down our feares, and our doubtings, and ſingularly encourage our faith to run, and with fulleſt eagerneſſe to embrace our God, our Chriſt, our Promiſes!

That
1. Gods
1. Love is ready.
2. Eare open.
2 Acceſſe made.
3. Special Interceſſions.
4 Imperfections nothing.
5 Grants certaine.

There be other meanes for the per-

perfecting of faith, as, Experiences, Observation, &c. which I have touched long since, and our Divines are plentifull this way, and therefore I spare.

3 The third spring of doubtings was, the study of the life of sense; the remedy of which, is the keeping of it downe: If you will keep off doubtings, you must keep down sense and feeling. *Blessed* (saith Christ to *Thomas*, *Joh.* 20. 29.) *are they that have not seen and yet have beleeved.*

Joh. 20. 29

If a man thinks this, That Christ is not mine, unlesse I handle him; and God is not mine, unlesse I see him; and grace is not mine, unlesse I feele it; hee will be for ever full of doubts and feares.

For the helping of which, consider these things.

1 Sense is not a fit Judge of our condition; it cannot report our estate but by what it feeles: but the spirituall estate is not alwayes under feeling; we should be

be good and bad, found and loſt, cheerfull and ſorrowfull, many times in one day, nay in one houre, if that ſenſe gave ſentence on our condition.

Beloved, thinke well on this; How can ſence reach unto the times of deſertion? unto the times of want? unto the times of indiſpoſition? unto the times where faith doth expreſſe no acts, but ſuch as are pure and cleare, and only grounded upon the Promiſes? In theſe diſtracted times Senſe findes nothing to ſpeake to us, to evidence for us, for God holds off, and wants hold up, and dulneſſes hold in, and we have nothing but a word of promiſe (all other things ſeem to faile and forſake) to ſuſtaine and retaine us.

There is not a latitude in ſenſe. As a rich mans hand cannot hold all his lands, ſo a Chriſtians ſenſe cannot comprehend all his condition.

2 The ſpirituall courſe many times goes againſt our ſenſe, and therefore ſenſe muſt be kept downe. You know that *Abraham* againſt hope beleeved in hope, *Rom.* 4. 18. Faith and ſenſe are many *Rom.* 4. 18

many times at a contradiction; faith will beleeve what ſenſe perceiveth not; and what our ſenſe doth perceive, that ſame our faith will not beleeve, but the contrary. *Though he kill me, yet will I truſt in him*, ſaith *Job*; and *Abraham* beleeved his ſons ſafety, in the ſacrificing of him; and wee our immortality, notwithſtanding our death and corruption. This is very certaine, that when we feele corruptions living, faith will beleeve them to be dying; and when we feele our ſelves in trouble, faith will then beleeve our comforts and deliverances: Faith uſually (I doe not ſay alwayes) beleeves the contraries unto ſenſe.

For your wayes are no my wayes, &c. As the heavens, &c. Eſa. 55.

My times are in thy hands. Pſa. 31. 15

Heb. 11. 1 The evidence of things not ſeene.

2 Chron. 20. 12 We know not what to doe, but our eyes are upon thee.

For ſenſe goes our way; and faith goes Gods way: Senſe allowes and ſets it ſelfe a time, and Faith is content to receive and take Gods times; Senſe moves upon what appeares, and Faith upon what is not yet: Senſe looks downward, and Faith lookes upward;

ward; Sense doth sustaine it selfe by something within us, and Faith sustaines it selfe by something without us, *Psal.* 27. 3. So *Hab.* 3. 17, 18. So *Esay* 8. 17. *I will wait upon the Lord that hideth his face from the house of* Jacob, *and I will looke for him*, Esay 50. 10. *Who is he that walketh in darknesse, and hath no light? Let him trust in the Name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.*

3 Sense or feeling is not *medium credendi*, but *fructus fidei*; (*i. e.*) It is not the ground of beleeving, but a fruit of faith. *v. g.* Take feeling in the most excellent parts of it, as in assurance, and joy, and peace, these are not Antecedents to faith, but Consequents of it. What is that? That is, a man hath not these first, and then faith for or from these, but hee hath faith first, and these afterward.

Why dost thou not beleeve?

If I had assurance that God were my God, and Christ were my Christ, and the Promises were

mine, I would: But say, Is the Word or thy Assurance the ground of faith? and wouldst thou have the fruit before the tree? or thy safety before thou layest hand on the rock? If thou wouldst have assurance, thou must then beleeve; for the sweetnesse of assurance flowes from that faith which by beleeving feeds on Christ. So if thou wouldst have joy, beleeve; for true joy doth not prevent, but attend beleeving.

Eph. 1. 13. *After yee beleeved, ye were sealed.*
1 Pet. 1. 8. *In whom though now ye see him not, yet beleeving, ye rejoyce with joy unspeakable, &c.*

We are oft times troubled by our owne pride and folly; God sets us a way to beleeve, and we will follow our owne way; Hee gives unto us his Word of Promise to ground our beleeving, and we will have our sense to be the ground: Of which course, I dare say, what *Abraham* spake to the curiosity of *Dives*, who would have some to bee sent from the dead, that his brethren might beleeve; to whom *Abraham* thus replyes, *If they heare not Moses and*

the

the Prophets, neither will they be perswaded though one rose from the dead, Luk. 16. 31. Luk. 16. 31

So say I, If men will not beleeve, because God hath promised, neither will they beleeve, if sense should stand up and speake; for we have more reason to suspect our own testimony, then to distrust Gods invitation and promise.

You will reply, This testimony of sense in Assurance is Gods owne answer, and therefore if we had it, it would the more settle our faith. Object.

I answer, Sol.

1 Gods testimonies are indeed of a setling and quieting vertue, whether they be the evidencing of our present interests in him, or speciall answerings of our present desires.

2 But then know, thou must first put to thy seale and hand of faith, before he delivers over to thee the assuring Evidences. And as yet I never knew any Christian

who could be answered without faith, or tooke comfort in that which yet he did not beleeve. For though it be the favour of God which doth properly comfort, nevertheleſſe it doth not actually comfort, unleſſe faith hath taken in that favour.

Object. But are not former experiences (which are nothing elſe but ſenſible feelings) grounds to future beliefe? Did not *David* remember the dayes of old?

Sol. I anſwer, True, Experiences are good encouragements to the future acts of faith, but the Word of God is ſtill the ground of faith: They are not intrinſecall grounds, but extrinſecall motives.

Note. You may conſider the experiences, either in things granted and performed, or in the manner of their performance. Thou haſt had Gods favour, thou haſt had an anſwer, but how didſt thou obtaine them? was it not by beleeving? was it not by waiting upon

ſome

some good word of promise? Thy injoying of them did not prevent thy beleeving of the word of Promise, but the beleeving of that word of Promise did let in, and bring unto thy soule that sweet and gracious experience; and therefore thy experience was not the ground heretofore, nor is it now; only thus farre it serves as a singular furtherance to faith, that that God, on whom heretofore thou didst beleeve, and from whom (in beleeving) thou receivedst such gracious helps and answers, will againe (he being the same for ever, and his Promises being *Yea* and *Amen*) by further beleeving on his Word, renew his gracious goodnesse and mercifull favour unto thy soul.

4. A fourth spring was, the restraining of faith, the curbing of it in its worke, and in occasions. Now the remedy of this is, to give way unto faith; give it scope, let it doe its whole service, as the Apostle said of patience,

Jam. 1. 4. Jam. 1. 4. *Let patience have her perfect worke*, so let faith; doe not restraine it, and then you shall be stayed, you shall be freed: The workings of one contrary restraine the other.

Therefore Christ checks his Disciples for their anxieties, for their carkings, and solicitudes, and would have them to let their faith loose to see a Father who Mat. 6. 32. would provide, *Mat. 6. 32.* They had poverty, or feared it; their wants came in, and losses, and so their fears came in, and thoughts. But how should they cast them out? Thus: If faith did beleeve helps, as well as impatience finde wants; if they would give way to faith to beleeve Gods providing, as well as sense to see the World abridging & ebbing, they would not have been so full of thoughts: *Shall he not much more cloth you, O yee of little faith?* ver. 30.

Three things here. But for the further help in this point, consider,

1 In any occurrence, Faith may be

be our Agent, it can deale for us, becauſe 1. Our temporall life is by faith; 2 The temporall Promiſes which reach over all the externall condition, are the bottome of faith. Hence it is ſaid, *Hab.* 2. 5. *The juſt ſhall live by his faith.* When we have no other help, yet faith can be our ſtaffe; when we have no other feeding, yet faith can be our bread: It can negotiate for the ſoul, it can make repaire to God, and ſingularly ſolace and ſuſtaine the ſoule in his word of Promiſe. [Hab. 2. 5.]

Suppoſe a mans meanes begin to ſhrink, his condition is drawing thin, he is neare to want, at ſuch a time this man may keepe downe his doubts, and tearing thoughts, if he will give faith a ſcope to work: *I will never leave thee nor forſake thee,* Heb. 13. 5. Here is a Promiſe now, and here is plenty enough to faith; and faith (if it may have its perfect worke) will ſuſtaine thee againſt all doubtings. [Heb. 13. 5.]

Object. I shall be left, sayest thou.

Sol. Thou shalt not, saith Faith.

Object. Not now, perhaps, for yet I have something.

Sol. Nay, never saith faith, for thou hast a continuall God, and hee hath promised a continuall help. Thou wouldst be a free-man, if faith were free, for faith will not leave God, and God will not faile faith; and why shouldst thou fail, when faith holds up thy heart, and God holds up thy faith?

Psal. 9. 10 *They, &c. for thou Lord hast not forsaken them that seek thee.*

So for any crosse and trouble; Not any burthen this way, but faith may be a shoulder to ease us: As long as there is a Promise to beare up faith, faith will have strength to bear off the disquietments of our troubles.

Object. I know not what to doe, saith the person.

Sol. No? saith Faith, Is not the Lord good, *a strong hold in the day of trouble*, and *doth not he know them that trust in him?* Nahum. 1. 7.

Nah. 1. 7

Object. Gods arme is not shortned.

But troubles are renewed, and come againe; and though I was deli-

delivered heretofore, yet now I feare.

Feare? ſaith faith, No reaſon for that. See a notable place, *Job.* 5. 17. *Happy is the man whom God correcteth.* If a man hath wounds, it is well for him to have a ſearching plaſter: and if a man hath a full ſtomach, it is well for him if he hath a potion; and if his ſpirits putrifie, it is well for him to be let bloud: So, &c. *Sol.* Iob 5. 17

18 *For he maketh ſore, and bindeth up; he woundeth, and his hands make whole.* 18.

19 *He ſhall deliver thee in ſix troubles, yea in ſeaven there ſhall no evill touch thee.* 19.

There is nothing new to God, nor difficult. Though our troubles be grievous to us, yet their deliverance is eaſie to God, and faith can finde a harbour for every ſtorme; yea, give faith but its ſcope, it will conclude preſent helps from former deliverances; and the eſcape out of old troubles, ſhall enſure faith in the new:

He

He who hath delivered, doth, and will still deliver, 2 Cor. 1.

2 Cor. 1.

God doth not alter, neither in his truth, nor in his goodnesse, nor in his power, although our conditions doe vary: The temptation may be new, and affliction new, but God is still the same, and the Promises the same, and faith can make use of one God to conquer twenty temptations, and one Promise to beare up against many afflictions.

2 In every occurrence there is a providence, and the issues depend upon it. If Satan tempts, if afflictions, and crosses, and losse, and contempts befall us, there is a Providence to permit them, to order them, to direct them, to restraine them; and if we gave faith a scope to work upon that Providence, we would not be so full of doubts.

1 For Satan, he doth indeed tempt and suggest, but he cannot doe this when he pleaseth, he must take leave of God to touch *Job* any

any way: And when hee doth tempt, the iſſue doth not depend upon his malice; the Lord looks on, and ſubminiſters marvellous ſtrength, and makes his ſervants to pray earneſtly, and heare earneſtly, and apply his Promiſes, and will deliver.

But his actions, and the iſſues of them are ſubordinate and under reſtraint.

We looke upon Satan, and not upon God, we look upon ſtrong temptations, but we look not upon mighty aſſiſtances; we conſider our owne weakneſſe, but doe not conſider Gods omnipotency; we think how unable we are, but not how able God is; we finde yet no deliverance, and doe not give faith its perfect work, to beleeve that God will finde a way to conquer for us. If faith did but dwell upon Gods providence in this, how he ſuffers Satan to buffet us, and how his grace is ſufficient for us, and how his power will be made manifeſt in weakeneſſe; how he hath delivered, and doth in our very reſiſtance deliver us, and hath promiſed to bruiſe

Note.

In God is my trust, I will not feare what man can doe unto me, said *David.* So here, &c. He is in *Aegypt*, & in the fiery fornace and in the prisons, &c.

bruise Satan under our feet; we would not doubt, we would not gratifie Satan with feares of fainting, but resist him stedfastly, by encouraging our selves in our God.

2 For our crosses and losses There is a providence in them, God is in all our troubles and wants: His wisdome is there, and his goodnesse: O how shall I be delivered? How? Let faith work, and that will tell thee how. Why should I thus be troubled? why? Let faith work, and that will tell thee; it is in *very faithfulnesse*, saith *David:* And, *It is good for me that I am afflicted.* No childe of God thus! Nay, let faith work, and it will cleare all; That a good condition is not exempted from afflictions, and that though God had one Sonne without sin, yet he had no Son without sorrow.

3 Our incouragements are more then our discouragements, and our helps exceed our oppositions; therefore faith is not to be restrained. The

The Prophet healed up his servants doubtings, 2 *King.* 6. 16. *Feare not, for they that be with us are more then they that be with them.* 2 Kin. 6. 16 Elisha's servant.

And so Christ to his perplexed and doubting Disciples about those exigencies and casualties to which they were exposed; *Feare not little flocke, it is your Fathers pleasure to give you a kingdome. q. d.* Be not so disquieted, so anxious for your lives, for your safeties. Though you be a flock, and a little flock, and the wolves are many, yet let the worst come to the worst, you shall have a Kingdom. Oppose that to this, and you need not doubt and feare. Christ to his Disciples. A Kingdome opposed to temporall safety.

So St. *John*, 1 Joh. 4. 4. *Ye are of God (little children) and have overcome them, because greater is hee that is in you, then he that is in the world.* 1 Joh. 4. 4. Gods Spirit opposed to Satans and Antichrist.

Once more St. *Paul*, Rom. 5. 20. *Where sinne abounded, grace did much more abound*; and 21. *As sinne reigned unto death, so grace reignes through righteousnesse, unto eternall life,* *Rom.* 5, 20 Grace opposed to sin.

life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

So againe for outward troubles, Esay 14. 14. *Feare not thou worme Jacob*, (*q. d.* Thou art a weake creature, contemptible creature, a worme, yet thou art *Jacob*, and therefore feare not) *for I will helpe thee, saith the Lord.* Though *Jacob* be weak, yet the God of *Jacob* is strong.

Esa. 41. 14 Help to trouble & weakness. And 2 Cor. 1. 5. *As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also, &c.*

So for outward losses, 2 *Chron.* 25. 9. said *Amaziah* to the man of God, *But what shall we doe for the hundred talents which I have given to the Army of Israel?* The man of God answered, *The Lord is able to give thee much more then this.*

2 Cor. 4. 17 *Our light afflictions, &c. work for us a far more exceeding weight of glory.*

From all which we see, that Faith hath the better grounds to rest on; there are more with faith then against it, for none can bee against it, except the evill creatures, and he who is for it, is the mighty Creator; all his power, and his goodnesse, and his Christ, and his Spirit, and his Word of Truth is for it: He is greater then all, so that faith may have singu-

My Father is greater then all, saith Christ.

lar

laſt matter to work upon in all occurrences.

It is on the better ſide, and on the greater ſide, on that ſide which will carry it, and beare downe the contrary.

Satan is againſt me. Object.

But greater is he (that Spirit of Chriſt) in me, then he that is in the world. Sol.

Sin is againſt me. Object.

But greater is Chriſt who is for me, then ſinne which is in me. Grace hath much more abounded. Sol.

Men in their power are againſt mee. Object.

But greater is that Almighty God, before whom the Nations are but as the drop of the bucket, and lighter then a duſt in the ballance. Sol.

Troubles are upon me. Object.

But my comforts are greater then my ſorrowes, and the glory which I expect, infinitely exceeds the trouble which I ſuffer. Sol.

Wants are upon me. Object.

But

Sol. But my supplyes are exceeding; I have a provident Father; and though I have not a large portion of earth, yet I have a sure Kingdome in heaven.

Beloved, if we would but often consider of this, that faith is still on the better, on the surer side, we would quit all our doubtings; we would not feare what man can do unto us, what Satan can do unto us; our owne infirmities would not disable us, nor afflictions; for still faith falls to the surest party, and therefore give it scope. Faith pitcheth upon no weak causes, upon no weak helps, upon no weak stayes; it stayes upon the Name of the God of *Jacob*.

Note.

O how might faith out-face the greatest oppositions, & trample under all our affronts, and losses, and doubts, if we did let it get out unto its encouragements, could we once come with faith to be perswaded indeed, that they who are so for us, are more then they who are against us!

Bre-

Brethren, in our Spirituall combats we have the better cauſe, and the better ſtrength; what help heaven can afford, we have. Therefore in all our diſtreſſes let us hearten our ſelves, and incourage our faith: Let us (as *Jehu* in another caſe) looke up, and ſay, *Who is on my ſide, who?* and then we may even ſay what the Pſalmiſt ſpake, *Pſal.* 124. 1. *If it had not been the Lord who was on our ſide, now may* (the Beleever) *Iſrael ſay,* 2. *If it had not been the Lord, &c.* 7. *Our ſoule is eſcaped as a bird out of the ſnare, &c.* 8. *Our help is in the name of the Lord, &c.* Pſa. 124. 1. 2. 7. 8.

5 A fifth ſpring of doubtings, was ſpeciall and particular ſins after converſion: Theſe, like a ſtrong diſeaſe, doe ſhake the very heart and ſpirit of the Chriſtian, and ſtagger him on every ſide; and like a cloud, fold up all our comfortable communion with God; like a dead fly they fall into all our ſervices. *If thou doſt ill, ſinne lyes at the doore,* ſaid God to *Cain:*

Cain: And so you shall finde it, that speciall sins after conversion doe much interrupt us in our approaches, and in our confidences.

Now the way to Cure this spring, is,

David. 1 To renew our sorrowes, to set open the fountaine: *David* did so after his great sins, and so did *Peter*; the one did *water his couch, and his teares were his meat day and night*, and the other *went out and wept bitterly.*

Peter.

Bitternes, what it imports. 1. Anguish. Bitternesse of sorrow (you read of it in *Zach.* 12. 10.) imports; 1. An anguish of spirit; as *David* said for his *Jonathan, My soule is distressed for thee*; so here the false Christian is distressed for sinning thus against his God, for losing his God; there is oft-times a very tearing and rending in the soule.

2. Fulnes of griefe. 2. A sensible fulnesse of griefe; as *Joseph* was full of compassion, and his bowels could hold no longer upon the oration of *Judah*;

so

so the false Christian is full of holy meltings, his heart is ready to break, and like a full vessell it must have vent.

Many a time he must, and doth consider this vile sinne, and hies him alone to poure out his grieved heart before the Lord, and shames himselfe before him, and confesseth with confusion of face his treacherous and unworthy dealing against his God.

There is, you know, a naturall sorrow, as for the losse of Children, and a Politicall sorrow, as was that for the good King *Iosiah*, and there is a spirituall sorrow, which is for our sins: This must now be exceedingly renewed, and you may raise it by consideration of mercy. O Lord, what have I done? Why have I done this? Thou shewedst me mercy in opening my eyes, in changing my heart, in calling me to holinesse, in pardoning of former sins; yet after all this, I have sinned against thee, I have wounded my heart,

Three sorts of sorrowes.

How to raise our sorrow.

heart, dishonoured thy Name, turned thy grace into wantonnesse, lost thy favour, broke my peace, injured my Christ, grieved thy Spirit, turned away thine eare, given advantage to Satan, and deserved for ever to sit in darknesse, &c. Beloved, if you finde your hearts unhumbled, you shall finde your hearts still to be unbeleeving.

Not. For besides that, great sins are great provocations to our gracious God, they are also (till we are humbled for them) great impediments to faith; faith cannot doe service for us, it cannot uphold us, it cannot bring a comforting promise unto our hearts, untill our hearts are humbled for our sins. God comforts none but mourners; and faith cannot fall in with him, untill our hearts fall out with our selves.

And here take heed you be not sleight and too quick; if you be, you shall have your doubtings againe. God doth seldome or never

never speake easie peace after a great sin. If you skin up a sore, it will breake out againe; if your sorrowes be not deep and sound, your feares will be fresh and multiplied; but let them be plous, and serious, and then the soule will after a while recover it selfe, and plead, and finde mercy with God, and be able to answer and silence all the doubtfull reasonings, which wil rise against faith in its wonted communions and applications.

But you will say, If we should sorrow thus, yet we should still doubt of mercy and Gods favour. Object.

I answer, Sol.

1 Thou hast now to answer thy doubtings; True, I did sin thus, but I have truly grieved for this sin; and though I might not apply mercy because I sinned, yet now I may, because I am grieved. A great cutterowd bear down the dam, and true sorrow will carry away our doubtings.

See Gods disposition to Ephraim, Jer. 31. 18. *I have surely heard* Jer. 31. 18.

heard Ephraim bemoaning himself, &c.

19 vers. 19. *I was ashamed, yea even confounded, because I did beare the reproach of my youth.* But then, ver. 20.

20. *Is Ephraim my deare sonne? Is he a pleasant childe? for since I spake against him, I doe earnestly remember him still, therefore my bowels are troubled for him, I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord.*

Though God be offended with our sins, yet he is delighted in our sorrowes; and nothing melts him more, then to see us come melting before him. The mournfull behaviour of *Josephs* brethren moved him, and the returning Prodigals falling downe to his Father, and crying out, went to the heart of him; and it is not without cause that *David* prayes, *Regard my teares that fall*; and, *Are not my teares registred?* And, *Put thou my teares into thy bottle.* Melting teares doe melt a tender God and Father.

The Father likes the Sons submission though not his rebellions.

2 To renew our repentance; in which I would comprehend both

both detestations and forsakings. These sinnes must be made very hatefull to the soule, you must imbitter them, you must purge out all the sweetnesse of them, all the liking of them; Nay you must set upon them as on things most abominable. Hence that phrase of *loathing your abominations*, Ezek. 36. Ezek. 36

St. *John*, Rev. 2. 5. adviseth decayed *Ephesus* to *remember from whence she was falne, and to repent.* Beloved, this is not a condition to stay in; this water is deep, and drowning is possible, if we lye in it; But if we rise out of our sins, then our doubtings will fall. It is with our Consciences, as it is with water in a pot; if you put no fire under it, it is quiet; but if you kindle a fire, the water will boyle and bubble, it hath no quiet; So though Conscience be quiet and kind, and molests us not, if yet fire come under, if any notable sin come in, and kindle in the heart; now the boylings, Rev. 2. 5. *Simile.*

now the feares and doubts of the soule.

And in these tumblings, the way to cease them, is to remove the fire, and then you shall see how the water growes to a stilnesse againe, and by degrees leaves fuming: So will our soules come to a pacified temper, to a setlednesse, if once our sins be removed; leave the sins, and ordinarily the doubts will leave the sooner.

The sea will be calme, if the winds cease. *Esay* 1. 16, 17. *Cease to doe evill, learne to doe well.* 18. *Come now and let us reason together, &c.*

For as sin is our unquiet sea, so repentance is our secure harbour: Any knowne sin unrepented, still puts in, and inlivens doubts in us; but repentance plucks out the venome, and the rage. An amended childe comes againe before his Father, and a reformed Christian and penitent, may * yet be confident.

* *Loc. cit.*

3 Sue out a speciall assurance; You may see by *Davids* disposition, after his speciall sins, that a generall acquittance would not serve the turne; for speciall sinnes you must sue out speciall assurance of pardon. Your

Your Consciences will never be quiet else; Nay this will not satisfie thee, that yet they are pardonable, that they are such as do not exclude thee out of the Proclamation; thou wilt never bee quiet untill God speakes peace, untill he doth put his seale to acquit thee of particular sins.

Sin will rise, it will lye uppermost, thou shalt feele it so, it will flye in thy face, it will come up in serious times, untill thou repent of it, and sue out thy discharge; therefore be earnest with the Lord for pardon of it, for a speciall acquitance: If the Lord Jesus did seale his bloud upon thy heart, thy doubtings would cease.

But you will say, There is now no hope, though we should grieve, though we should repent, though wee should sue for pardoning mercy, there is now no hope; for these are sins after conversion, and they are great ones too; and besides we finde no particular promise to ease our soules upon. Obj&.

Sol. Let me answer this doubt fully, for it is a folded one; there are many in it; consider therefore;

Three things. The pardoning promise is exclusive, in respect of of sinners; but inclusive in respect of penitents not al. sinners, but all repenting sinners shall be pardoned.

1 The promise of pardon is indefinite to repentance, and I beseech you marke this point: God doth not say, I will pardon sins simply, but if men repent and forsake sins, they shall have mercy. So againe, in promising pardon to repentance, he doth not promise it respectively, and conditionally, but absolutely and fully.

What is that? That is, God doth not say, If you repent of such or such sins, then you shall have pardon; but he saith simply and absolutely, If you repent; So that let the sinnes be never so great, never so many, yet if they be sins of which thou now truly repentest, they are assuredly pardoned, Esa. 55. 7. *Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him returne unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon*

Esa. 55. 7.

upon him, and to our God, for hee will abundantly pardon. Here you see a promise of abundant pardon to be made unto the penitent; though he hath had thoughts, though he hath had wayes, yet if he forsakes them, the Lord will pardon, and shew mercy.

Againe, because that pardon is promised to actuall repentance indefinitely, therefore let the sinner be what he will, let him be a person who was not converted before, or let him be a person already converted, yet if he begins true repentance, or the other renewes his true repentance, they shall be pardoned: And the reason is, because it is not simple sinne simply in such an estate which God pardons, but it is sin repented of, which God doth promise to pardon: And therefore if an evill man, whose life hath been a course of sinne, repents and leaves his sins, hee shall have mercy: Or if a good man fall accidentally into sinne, upon his repent-

tance he may confidently plead out Gods promises of pardon, for he shall have mercy upon his repentance, as you may see, *Prov.* 28. 14. *He that forsakes his sins, shall finde mercy*, Ezek. 18. 32. *Turne your selves, and live.* See *ver.* 21, 22. *If the wicked will turne from all his sins, they shall not be mentioned unto him.*

Pro. 28. 14
Eze. 18. 32
ver. 21, 22.

Whence we may infer, that if God will forgive his enemies, he will then (upon the same repentance) forgive his children. If a King will pardon a returning Traitor, will he not receive then a returning sonne? It was a pious speech of St. *Chrysostome*, *Si Deus promittit gratiam nobis offendentibus, quid faciet nobis pœnitentibus?* If he promiseth grace unto us when wee are sinning, what then will he confer on us, if we be repenting?

Simile.

2 Christ is of great vertue still, and as able to put away the sins after conversion, as well as before; therefore hee is called *the same*,

same, yesterday, to day, and for ever: Heb. 13. 8.
And the Apostle reasons it in the
Romans, *If when we were enemies,* Rom. 5. 10
we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, how much more being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life?

We must think of the pacification by Christ, of the atonement, of the propitiation of the satisfaction, not as confined to any one sinne, or to any one estate, but in respect of its sufficiency, reaching over both estates, and all the sinnes in both. What is that? That is, the death of the Lord Jesus was not only to reach the sins thou didst commit in thy unconverted estate; and the rest afterward in thy converted estate, thou art to satisfie for by thine owne power some other way. What is this but that Popish leaven? that selfe-justification? those humane satisfactions? What is this but to divide our salvation 'twixt Christ and our selves? What is this but to restraine either the sufficiency,

or the efficacy of his death?

No, Christ is unto us in respect of sins before, and sins after conversion, as the Lord was to the *Israelites*, a pillar of a cloud, and a pillar of fire, Jesus Christ is a cloud in the day, (in the time of conversion) to cover our sins upon our repentance; and a pillar of fire by night, (for the times of former darkneſſe) upon our repentance to consume away our sins, &c.

Christ a pillar of cloud, and a pillar of fire.

The difference of our estates doth no way adde or diminish to the strength and efficacie of his death: His bloud can cry as loud now as heretofore, and is not lesse effectuall to get pardon for our falls in the way, then for our sinnings, when we were not in the way, as is evident in the sins of *Paul* before his conversion, and in sins of *David* and *Peter* after their conversion; for Christ is our continuall Mediator, and everlasting Intercessor.

Object. But you will reply, These sins

cut

cut off all our interest in Christ, and all relations, and therefore no hope now.

I answer, though the comfortable interest be cut off, (untill the time of sound repentance) yet the radicall interest is not: As the Leprous person was debarred the use of his house (untill he was cleansed) yet he was not debarred the title and right of his house; and therefore thou mayest (upon thy repentance) sue unto the Lord by the blood of thy Saviour, the pardon of these sins.

Sol. No sinne that thou canst grieve for, cuts off our communion and interest.

3 The Lord is mercifull still unto repentants; you shall read in *Psal.* 136. that his mercy is set downe twenty six times, with the adjunct of everlastingnesse, *His mercy endureth for ever.* And *Psal.* 86. 5. *Thou Lord art good, and ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy, unto all them that call upon thee.* So, *ver.* 13. *Great is thy mercy towards me.* And, ver. 15. *Thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, long-*

Psal. 136.

Psal. 86. 5.

13.

15.

suffe-

ſuffering, and plenteous in mercy and
Mica.7.18. *truth.* So *Micah* 7. 18. *Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and paſſeth by the tranſgreſſion of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy.* 19. *He will turne again, he will have compaſſion on us, he will ſubdue our iniquities, and thou wilt caſt all their ſinnes into the depths of the ſea.*

Mercy is not ſtrange unto God, it is his nature, it is his delight, and repentance will not bee hid from his eyes, if it be not hid from our hearts: He calls us to repent, and cauſeth us to repent, that he might ſhew us his mercy, and everlaſtingneſſe of his mercy.

6. A ſixth ſpring of doubtings was indiſpoſition unto or about ſpirituall duties: Whence wee feare the truth of grace, which is active and lively, and doubt our acceptance with God, by reaſon of our dulneſſe and deadneſſe.

For the curing of this, conſider

1 That

1 That dulneſſe in holy duties is poſſibly incident to men truly ſanctified. Beloved, there is a great difference betwixt a dead heart, and a dull heart: That heart is properly tearmed dead, which wants a living ſpring, and therefore ſpirituall duty is contrary unto it, it hath a ſecret averſeneſs to holy ſervices, it cares not for holy prayer; there is not onely an indifferency whether the work be done, but a determinate diſlike, and poſitive unwillingneſſe, or rather (a Nolition) a nillingneſſe to the ſame. Whence ariſeth that ſhuffling carriage in wicked men, to finde diverting occaſions, and arguing reaſonings againſt the ſtrictneſſe and ſpiritualneſſe of duty.

A dead heart.

The difference twixt a dead heart and a dull heart.

But againe, that heart is properly tearmed dull, which hath in it a living ſpring, but hath not a lively operation: *The Spirit is willing*, (ſaid Chriſt) there the ſpring was open; *but the fleſh is weake*, there the

A dull heart.

the operation was narrow. The Christian may say with *David*, *My heart (O Lord) is ready, my heart is prepared*; and as *Paul*, *I would doe good*, and *I delight in the Law of God after the inward man*; but yet saith he, *I finde a law, that when I would doe good, evill is present with me*: And *I see another law in my members warring against the law of my minde*. So in the *Galatians*, *The flesh lusteth against the spirit, &c. and these are contrary one to the other, so that ye cannot doe the things that yee would*. Ye would doe, but ye cannot doe; Yee cannot alwayes do the work ye would do, and ye cannot do it in such a manner as ye would do it.

Rom. 7. 21. 22.

Gal. 5. 17.

You know that a full vessell which hath a narrow neck, it cannot send out the waters so speedily, nor so fully; and a sick man, who would fetch more then a turne about his chamber, hee cannot doe that sometimes; if he doth it, it is with extream wearisomenesse, not of his minde, but of

Similes

of his body: Or as a lusty and able man escaped out of prison with a great chaine about his leg, he would run away, but the chaine hinders him, and vexeth him, so that it doth indispose him in the motion.

In like manner, is it many times with good people; The heart, the will is bent, it is resolved for prayer, for hearing, &c. but then there is a chaine clogs them, there is a spirituall weaknesse, there is flesh in them as well as spirit, and this doth dull them, this doth indispose them about the doing, about the exercise of their intentions and desires.

Therefore let us take heed of denying or concluding the absence of grace, from the infirmity of working. *David prayed often to be quickned, and so may wee, and yet be alive. It is one thing to have life, another thing to have livelihood: That may be present, when this is absent: for a Christian, I may have a dull tem-

*Psal. 119 25. My soule cleaveth to the dust (that was low enough) quicken thou me, &c. 28. My soul melteth for heavinesse, strengthen thou me according to thy word. Life and livelihood are diffe-

rent

per of body, not able to render unto him the ſpirituall ſenſe of ſpirituall duties, melancholy doth intercept the vitality not onely of nature, but of grace.

2 He may not ſo ſeriouſly meditate and dwell upon the wayes and motives of livelihood, hee may have but remiſſe, and unpiercing, or unapplying thoughts of Gods great love and mercy, of Chriſts blood and interceſſion, of the Promiſes's goodneſſe, and fulneſſe; and therefore his ſpirit may be dull.

The oyle may not be on the wheel, nor that gale to the ſhip

3 He may not have ſuch an actuall aid and ſpeciall influence from the Spirit of Chriſt to excite his ſpirituall frame and temper; and then if that wind bee more ſlacke, our ſhip will move on with leſſe forwardneſſe.

Or laſtly, perhaps he may have over-laſht, he hath been (improvidently or accidentally) in the dulling wayes; he hath been ſurfetting upon ſome ſinne, or too greedily embracing the heavy world.

world, or been idle in his particular calling. But,

Whatsoever the cause may be, this is certaine, that Indisposition is not fundamentall; it is not such a case, which nullifies the estate of Grace. For as in our most lively times there is more duty then we can throughly do; so in our dullest times, there is not more duty then we would doe. Indisposition is not fundamentall. Note.

And this know; that the Christian condition keepes up for truth of being, notwithstanding the many pauses, the many eclipses, the many indispositions which may, and do accompany it.

But yet again, secondly, be informed of this, that God observes the bent of the heart in the duty, and accordingly accepts of it. You know that place in the Chronicles, how that the good Lord did pardon every one who prepared his heart to seeke him, though he were not cleansed according to the purification of the Sanctuary. 2 Chro. 30 18, 19. Gods eye is more on the intent of the workman then on the extent of the work.

The

Note. The greatest actions managed from a corrupt heart are not accepted with God: (All the superfluous and abundant gifts of the Pharisees, were worthlesse, yet the Widows mite found acceptance) The meanest duties set forth with a perfect heart are acknowledged by God, he will take notice of them; for God looks to the heart: Hee eyes not so much thy behaviour, he listens not so much to thy words, but (through these) he considers thy heart; if that come with life, though thy body come with dulnesse, though thy tongue be not so fluent, yet if there be life and truth in the heart, hee will finde duty and accept of it.

Simile. You remember that *Simile* of the Goldsmith, who hath a skilfull eye to finde out the smaller, and neglected wayes of gold, though covered with much drosse, and many times there is much fire, and much gold, when both are hidden with dust and coal:

coal: So it is with the Lord, hee can scent out the secrets of our desires, and what we would doe is observed and taken with him for well done, notwithstanding the many indispositions which cover our Altar.

Our groans are not hid from him.

Therefore it is *Davids* counsel to *Salomon* his son, *Know thou the God of thy Father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind, the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: If thou seek him, hee will be found of thee, &c.*

1 Chron. 28.9.

Beloved, we are mistaken about duty; we judge it not to bee duty, unlesse the tongue can speake much, and our behaviours be fresh, &c. As if a man were not a man, and did no worke in course cloathes: But know wee that the tending of spirituall service with integrity of heart, is duty.

God can find duty in speechlesse tears, and sighs, & groans. Rom. 8.

And that is it which God considers, and unto which hee hath made many promises of acceptance,

ceptance, and audience, and grant.

Object. This is something to stay us, you will say: But now wee sticke at this, Whether the bent of our hearts bee intire, notwithstanding our indispositions and dulnesses?

Sol. That may easily be discerned: You may know that the bent of the heart is right and eaven in duties.

How to know that the bent of the heart is right.

1 By not contenting your selves with this heavy kinde of performing of duties: You will have life enough to dislike your selves, though you have not power enough to mend your services.

There are some men (and they have evill hearts) which will be picking some help and pleas for their lasie and dull serving of God, from what hath been spoken.

Object. O say they, though we cannot doe as others doe, yet our hearts are as good, and as willing;

God.

God knowes the heart, and regards it.

He doth so, and he knows this of thy heart, that it yeelds him lasie service, and dislikes not it selfe therein: but now the true Christian is not satisfied with this that God accepts of a weak heart; but it would also herenpon bring him a better heart.

It doth many times fall out with it selfe, and rebuke its owne dulnesse, *Why art thou so heavy, O my soule? and why art thou so indisposed within me?* Thou art serving of a living God, why dost thou not serve him with a more lively heart? And then it breaks out on the sudden, Well, Lord, if I had a better heart, thou shouldest have it; If I could finde more affections I would bestow them on thee.

Herenpon,

2 It falls upon the wayes of livelihood, and exercises the act of quickning. It will not rest in this indisposition, but will use

all

all the means to better it selfe, and this doth abundantly manifest its bent.

Simile. As you know, the weake person he will have one turne more, and the ingenuous Scholar will write one line more, and the desirous Archer will make one shot more: So the sincere heart, hee will assay yet more in duty, perhaps frequency in duty (saith he) may breed fervency in duty. (A man may get him an heat by walking, and by rubbing his benummed parts.) Or perhaps, saith hee, our duty more in another kinde, may quicken mee to duty in every kinde: as some physicke and cordial to the heart may cause more nimblenes in the hands and feet. I am somewhat dull in praying, I will therefore read more, or heare more, that I may finde matter to set on my prayer: I may perhaps meet with that in reading, which may set me on in praying: Or I am somewhat dull in hearing, I will

Note.

there-

therefore pray more, perhaps God may heare my prayer, and then I may heare his word with more attention, delight, profit, &c. And assuredly so it falls out many times, that our indispositions are more about some particular duties, which are singularly removed by the small dispositions, yet left in us about some other duties.

Or if all this betters not, yet saith he, I will even goe to Gods Ordinances, and will come before him, and bring him my soule thus indisposed, perhaps yet hee may be disposed to quicken mee by his Word, to cheere me by his Sacrament: Who knowes but that he may let fall a blessing? that he may so powerfully direct himselfe to mee, as to shake my heart, as to throw off all my dull distempers, and revive my Graces, and excite my affections, &c?

So that if you perceive your dulnesses, if they grieve and displease you, if you will not rest in them,

them, if you yet set out to the means of removall, assuredly your hearts are sincere, God seeth that the bent is honest, that thou art indeed willing; and take this for thy comfort, that if it bee thus with thee, God (for present) accepts of thy services, and ere long thou shalt be freed of these indispositions, which doe accompany thee in thy services: God will drive this sleepe from thine eyes, and these fowles from thy sacrifice. Once againe, though, note that

3 The cause of all acceptation is in Christ: therefore doe not doubt that God will reject thy services because of thy indispositions, but beleeve hee will accept of thy sincere endeavours, because of his Christ. Beloved, it were good for us to consider all things about duty. A sincere heart must set it out, a gracious God must take it, and

a

a mighty Redeemer and Intercessor must present it. Christ presents that to his Father, which we present to Christ; the duty belongs to us, but the reason of acceptation is not in the Petitioner, but in the Intercessour: God accepts not for our fulnesse, nor for our livelinesse, but for his Sons worthinesse, for his merits, who ever lives to make intercession for us, who offers up the prayers of the Saints, with the perfume and odours of his righteousnesse.

Note.

Rev. 8. 3 *The Angel had a golden Censer, and much Incense, that hee should offer it with the prayers of all Saints upon the golden Altar.*

Are thy prayers fervent? They are not accepted for their owne strength: Are they weake? They are not rejected for their impotencie. Is thy heart sincere? Then know that Christ hath sufficiency of merits to cover thy (selfe-blamed) indispositions, and to gaine the acceptance of the weakest (if sincere) services.

He appeares for us. Heb. 9.

Therefore this were a good way, in case of disliked indispositions, not to place the accep-

Note. tance in our selves, but in Christ; and though there be inequality of expressions in duty, *quoad nos*, in us, yet there is a constancy of intercession by Christ, *propter nos*, for us. Sometimes we come more fully, sometimes more emptily; sometimes wee run, and other times all that wee can doe is to move; sometimes affections are smart, judgements quicke, expressions ready, requests fervent, hearings reverent and delightfull, yet at other times the wheeles are almost downe, the spring moves slowly, our affections turne not so lively, our judgements are barren, language sticks, Requests breath only, but flame not; wee heare, and give credit, and slocke it up, and that is all: Here you see the various carriages of our holy services in respect of the person, yet there is no such variety in Christ.

Whence it would follow, that if our duties found grace with God, because of their accidentall vivacity

vivacity in our performance, all our weaker services were utterly lost, and in case of the more lively services, Christ also were lost; because the reason of their acceptation would be in themselves.

But Christ is required to make up our duties, as well as to make up our persons; he must be a Mediator for these, and an Intercessor for those: And because there is a constant merit, and a perpetuall offering of that same up, with all the prayers of all Saints; hence it is that they are accepted, not for their owne worth, but for his Name.

As our persons, so our prayers must stand before God by Christ.

7 A seventh spring of doubtings, was, a conceit of successlesnesse in duty: We have prayed much for the perfecting of such Graces, or the subduing of such corruptions, or establishing in such duties and courses, yet nothing comes of it, we are as we were, and where we were; therefore we doubt that we are not good, or that God doth not intend

tend any good to us.

This is the spring, the cure and remedy of which, may bee made up by these considerations, *viz.*

1 Service and progresse in duty belongs to us, and their rewards and recompences belong to God. I have prayed a long time to God; True, and thou art bound to pray still. I have heard a long time; True, and thou art bound to heare still. Thou dost but what thou art bound to doe. It is the *Simile.* Husbandmans part to plow the Land, and to sow the Corne; and it is Gods part to give the harvest. Hereupon, saith the Gal. 6 9 Apostle, *Let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap, if* Psal. 65. 2 *we faint not: For God is a God hearing Prayer, and he will be found of* 9. 10. *them that seeke him, and will not forsake them.*

2 God is a good Master: Job did not serve him for nought. I Psal. 118. 5 *called upon the Lord, and he answered me,* said *David.* And in another 116. 1, 2 place, *He hath heard my voyce, and*

my supplications, and inclined his eare unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live. Not one of the servants who traffiqued with the talents, that could complaine hee was an austere Master. Therefore God takes it to heart, when they in Malachi charged him with neglect, and irrecompence for serving of him; Your words have been stout against me, saith the Lord. How so? To have said it is in vaine to serve God, and what profit is it that we have kept his Ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord? Whereupon the Lord instantly manifesteth his bountifull and tender disposition to them who did serve him, and think on his Name, They shall be mine (saith he) and when I make up my jewels, I will spare them, as a man spareth his owne sonne that serveth him. Then shall yee returne, and discerne betweene the righteous and the wicked, betweene him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not. (i. e.) Then you shall know what it is not to labour to serve him.

Mal. 3. 13. 14. 17. 18.

3 Petitioners must wait an answer, as well as present a request: Therefore know that faith in point of seeking unto God hath a double office.

Faith hath a two-fold office.

1 One is, to deliver up in the Name of Christ our wants, which God hath promised to supply in his Word.

2 Another is, to expect and wait those supplies which God hath promised. Therefore saith David, *As the eyes of servants looke unto the hand of their Masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistresse, so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, untill* (even so long, let it be never so long) *untill that he have mercy upon us.*

Psal. 123. 2

Waiting doth distinguish between desires & unsetled humour.

And (beloved) this waiting doth notably distinguish betwixt desires, which come from an unsetled humour, and those which come from poverty of spirit. In them, we give on, but presently give up, as we doe in sleight visits with men, knock at doore, and if none answer, away we goe,

Simile.

our

our buſineſſe was little, and ſo our ſtay is anſwerable; but in thoſe deſires which ſpring from poverty of ſpirit, theſe have faith to beleeve that God is at home, and have patience to wait his anſwer. Poverty of ſpirit.

As a poore begger, (ſuppoſe ſuch a one as *Lazarus*) he will lye at the gate, and knock more then once, and wait more then an hour for ſome almes, for ſome crums of our tables; and ſo will humble Chriſtians, who are truly poore in ſpirit, they will be at heaven gates, and put up requeſt after requeſt, and expect day after day the ſpeeding of them from the throne of grace and mercy. *Simile.*

But we cannot wait. Object.

You cannot! And that is the reaſon you miſſe of your anſwers. If beggers will not ſtay, they loſe their almes; and if Chriſtians wil not wait, they loſe their grants. *Sol.*

Yet let me not goe off eaſily from this ſcruple, for in it lyes the choyſeſt part of the cure: If

we could but wait on God, then assuredly we should see that wee have no reason to cry out of fruitlesnesse in seeking.

Object. How may we doe to wait?

Sol. Thus.

Four motives to wait. 1 You are sure to speed. Certainty of answer will beget constancy in seeking. Sure to speed? How shall wee be sure of that? Thus.

1 Take it in promises, and so you are sure.

2 Take it in performances, and so likewise you are sure.

Promises. For Promises, you know, there is a certainty in them; we have no way to pierce into Gods intentions of doing us good, but by his Promises; and in them we have: For as the words of man doe deliver unto us the thoughts of man; so the Promises of God doe discover unto us the intentions and purposes of God. Now then observe what God hath promised to waiting;

Simile

Hab. 2. 3. Hab. 2. 3. *The vision is yet for an appoin-*

appointed time, but at the end it ſhall ſpeake, and not lye; though it tarry, wait for it, becauſe it will ſurely come, it will not tarry. Here is the duty, *Wait*; Here is the Promiſe delivered, doubled, trebled, *It ſhall ſpeak, It will come, It will ſurely come*: Nay doubled againe, *It ſhall not lye, it will not tarry.* It is as if God had ſaid, Doe but wait, and you ſhall be delivered, you ſhall be delivered, you ſhall be delivered, you ſhall be delivered, you ſhall be delivered. O the Rhethoricke of God! O the certainty of his Promiſes!

Pſal. 27. 14. *Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he ſhall ſtrengthen thine heart.* Pſal. 27. 14.

Eſa. 40. 31. *They that wait upon the Lord, ſhall renew their ſtrength*: they ſhall mount up with wings as Eagles, they ſhall run and not be weary, and they ſhall walke and not faint. Eſa. 40. 31.

Micah 7. 7. *I will looke unto the Lord, I will wait for the God of my ſalvation, my God will heare me.* Mica 7. 7.

Performances. Will you never see a certainty in performances? Then read *Psal.* Psal. 49. 1 40. 1. *I waited patiently upon the Lord, and he enclined to me, and heard my cry.* Here was waiting, and here was sure speeding.

Object. He was but one man.

Sol. Then *Heb. 6.* 12. *Be ye followers* Heb. 6. 12. *of them, who through faith and patience inherit the Promises.* They did inherit the Promises, (*i. e.*) got all the good out of them by patient waiting. If we be sons, let us wait, and then we also shall bee heires of the Promises; the good of them shall be setled upon us.

Isa. 49. 23 See also *Esay* 25. 9. and *Esay* 49. 23. *None shall be ashamed who wait on me.* From all which we infer, If God hath made sure Promises, If he hath hitherto performed those Promises unto such as wait upon him, Then if we wait, we shall surely speed, &c.

2 The things you desire are great, and worth the waiting for.

Simile. You would thinke him a strange man, who would not wait the sealing

ſealing of the pardon which the King hath promiſed him. It is a wonderfull thing, that when God promiſeth us pardon of ſins, wee cannot have patience to ſeeke and wait the ſealing of it; yet pardon of ſins is ſuch a thing, as our very life lyes in it.

So againe, Is not grace a ſingular thing? Is not mortifying of ſin an excellent thing? And is it much that the Lord puts us to more frequent ſeekings, to iterated prayers and duties, for thoſe gifts and grants which are ſo high in their nature? ſo admirable in their uſe? ſo ſaving in their end? can you be better imployed?

3 The anſwers will ſweeten, and eaſily recompence all the times and labours of ſeeking. When the man-childe is borne, all the labour in travell is forgotten; the joy of it drownes the ſenſe of that. Let God but lift up the light of his countenance on thee, it will anſwer and quit all. As the Wiſe men when they ſaw the ſtar, rejoyced.

all the prayers that ever thou madeſt in thy life. *I found him whom my ſoule loveth, I held him, &c.*

Cant. 3, 4. And *David* doth forget the aking of his bones, &c. when God did anſwer him.

Doubled ſervices have uſually doubled mercies; for when God prepares the heart, he will incline the eare; and when he intends a great mercy, he firſt enlargeth the heart to a greatneſſe of deſire and ſeeking. Every true ſeeking of God opens the heart wider, and ſecretly addes to the ſtocke; The more prayers we have put up to uſe in the hands of God, the larger will the returne of them prove: When wee have beene long ſuiters, God doth (ordinarily) at length diſmiſſe us with more then what wee aske; ſo that he will anſwer us not only for our prayers, but alſo for our time.

Prayers are our mony to uſe.

5 We ſhall have the beſt things in the fitteſt times; therefore we ſhould not accuſe our ſervices as loſt, for God will anſwer them; but then it ſhall be in the beſt things, at the beſt times.

O,

O, will you ſay, Is it not more then time that I had more grace, and ſin more ſubdued? Object.

I anſwer, Perhaps not; God doth know that thou haſt a proud temper, and thou groweſt bigge, and art apt to ſwell upon enlargements; thou art apt to deſpiſe others, and to make glorious conceits of thy ſelfe, and therefore he doth anſwer thee, not by victory, but by combate; That is, he doth not preſently ſubdue thy ſin, that it ſhall not trouble thee, but lets it alone that it ſhall exerciſe thee, thou ſhalt finde matter to keep thee low and humble, when ſtill thou feeleſt ſuch remnants, and workings of corruption. To the reſiſtance of which God doth yet enable, and after thy heart growes more emptied, thou ſhalt have victory. Againe, though thou prayeſt againſt thy ſins, yet thou doſt venture upon the provocations and occaſions of ſinne, and therefore the Lord may juſtly hold up, becauſe thou Sol.

thou holdst not in. Now the Lord (by his silence) will teach thee in these times, forbearance on thy part, as well as forbearance on his part; and then upon thy next prayers accompanied with this watchfulnesse, and avoydance of occasions, he will let fall more strength and power to mortifie thy sinfull dispositions.

Wherefore let us not faint in case of suspensions, for God doth suspend his grants to the times, when thou art fitted to receive them, and when it is fit for him to open them.

Is it sin that thou wouldst have subdued? Doe thou seek his subduing power, and withall, decline inviting occasions either from thy selfe or others, and then God will heare thee. Now thou art fitted, and now is it fit for God to help thee; but if thou wilt pray against the disposition, and run still upon the occasion, God will not answer thee.

Is it grace and cavenesse in duty

which

which thou wouldeſt have? Then thou muſt uſe former grace, and ſticke cloſe with humbleneſſe, and diligence, and reverence to the means, and now God will ſupply all thy wants. Untill thou haſt a more humble and doing heart, thou art not fitted for more grace. *God giveth more grace to the humble*, ſaith *James*. James 4.

I ſay, he will give thee more grace: Thou ſhalt have enough for thy condition, and enough for thy ſalvation, although thou haſt not ſuch an equall meaſure with others, whom God intends for more publick uſe and ſervice, then he doth thee.

5 Gods forbearings ſhould not occaſion ceſſation, but earneſtneſſe: He is not ſilent, that we thereby ſhould become ſpeechleſſe, but that our deſires ſhould grow more fervent.

You know that the skilfull Angler doth not draw back his bait that the fiſh ſhould not bite, *Simile.*

but

but that by this meanes he ſhould the more greedily leap after the bait.

And the tender mother ſteps aſide, not that ſhee would not have the child ſeek her, but that it may even dote after her.

So doth God many times draw backe and ſtep aſide, and as the Prophet *Jeremy* ſpeaks, *He becomes as a ſtranger, and as a way-faring man who turneth aſide, &c.* And as *David* ſpeaketh, *He is as one that ſleeps*: Why? What? Is it that he doth not know us? No. Is it that he doth not heare us? No. Is it that hee will not ſpeed us? No.

Jer. 14.8.

He knows our thoughts long before His eare is open, and before they call I will anſwer. Eſa. While they are ſpeaking, I will anſwer. Loc. cit.

Why then? Surely becauſe firſt he delights in this muſick, he ſmels a ſweet odour and ſavour in all our humble ſacrifices, hee delights in the broken heart.

2 Hee loves that wee ſhould *ſtrive with him for his grants*, (that is the phraſe *Rom.* 15.30.) and *wraſtle with him* (as *Jacob*) and ſo *prevail upon him*: And that we ſhould

Ro. 15. 30
Ro. 12. 3, 4
Eſa. 62. 7.

give

give him no reſt, (Eſa.62.7.) *untill he hath ſatisfied our ſoules with mercy, and eſtabliſhed them with his grace.*

3 He would inhance the goodneſſe of the things deſired, and make us to wear the anſwers with more thankfulneſſe to himſelfe, with more comfort to our ſelves, and with more benefit to others.

8 An eighth cauſe of doubtings was, weakneſſe of judgement about the eſſentials of ſalvation, which neceſſarily doth cauſe doubtings, both in reſpect of thoſe ſuſpitions, and errours, and miſtakings to which it is ſubject; as alſo in reſpect of that ſcrupuloſity which ever adheres to the conſcience, where weakneſſe adheres to the judgement.

Now the remedy of this ſpring, conſiſts in theſe particulars.

1. Get a diſtinct knowledge of Fundamentals: It is the emptineſſe of our minds that wee bee prepoſterous in our ſearches.

Many

Many a Christian loseth himselfe in a sea of opinions, before hee hath squared himselfe with the first grounds of Religion.

Remember this, that the first truths doe support and maintaine the rest, (as the cornerstone the rest of the building) and are as the originall Will, which decides many scruples in Law. Hence is it, that some men doubt about speciall conclusions, because they are ignorant of the generall principles, which were they distinctly knowne, the falsity of any conclusion would easily become evident unto them. Men usually dispute first, and know last. As if a souldier would range an Army, before hee hath learned to handle his weapons. How ordinary is it to heare disputes of Original sin, of Predestination, of Redemption, of Faith and Justification, of Assurance and of Obedience, of the degrees of grace and duty, of the direct and absolute way of life?

Simile.

Simile.

Ergo, saith *Paul*, Rom 14. 1. *Him that is weak in the faith, receive you, but not to doubtfull disputations.*

life? &c. I say it is ordinary to heare some arguing of these, who yet are ignorant of the nature of these. But,

Pauls method was to lay down his foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith towards God, which if *Paul* thought fit to teach, I thinke fit for us to learne. That ship rowls least, which is well bottomed; and that house shakes least, which is well founded; And that Christian doubts least, who is well grounded in the maine points of Religion: For besides this, that Primitive truths give an aime to all truths; so likewise they uncase all errours, and heresies, and opinions, and arguments which come to pervert the minde another way. And surely when the minde obtaines an evidence by one truth for another, and by truth also of errour contrary unto it, it is in the least hazard of doubting; for as much as doubtings ordinarily

Heb. 6. 1.

True knowledg is as the day wherin we walk more stedfastly; and ignorance like the night, in which we are full of fears, and often stumble.

ly arise from some errour, or misapprehension in the minde.

2 Get a distinguishing knowledge of Fundamentals from Accessories. Every part of the house is not the corner-stone or the pillars: A man may take away much, and yet the house may stand: If you take away the painting and musicke, or some feelings, and annexed posts, yet the house may stand.

Simile.

So may a Christians salvation, though hee know not many accessory truths; nay, although he mistake about them; nay, although he deny them, if this deniall be not accompanied with a proud perversnesse, but arise onely from inevidence and inability.

There are three things, about which it were good for Christians to have a distinguishing knowledge, *viz.*

1 Fundamentals.
2 Consequents.
3 Indifferents.

Fun-

Fundamentals, I call thoſe Truths which take up the worke and way of ſalvation; as the doctrine of ſinne, and of Chriſt, and Faith, and Repentance, &c. for theſe are ſuch things, without the knowledge of which, no man can be ſaved. Three things.

Conſequents, I call thoſe illations or inferences which doe flow from the primitive truths, either *virtute rei*, in the nature of the thing, juſt as a ſtream flows from the fountaine; or *virtute intellectus*, in the judgement of the perſon, as the concluſion is made by ſuch or ſuch a mans conjecturall opinion, to flow from ſuch a principle, or ſuch a Text.

Indifferents, I call thoſe actions which in themſelves are neither holy, nor evill; neither is a man by any expreſſe command from God, (*ſpecificativè*) injoyned them, or (*ſpecificativè*) prohibited them: Which things conſidered abſolutely, if a man doth uſe Yet actions in themſelves indifferent in reſpect of circumſtances, may be offenſive & ſinfull. See Rom. 14. 14, 15, &c.

use them he shall not be saved; if he doth not, he shall not be damned. They doe no more constitute a Christian, then a garment doth a man; which whether hee doth weare it yea or no, yet still he is a man.

Now this distinguishing knowledge doth exceedingly assoyle the doubting heart, which doth oft-times shake and rowle about the lawfulnes of indifferents, &c.

3 Reduce all conjectures and consequent truths unto the first truth: It is the counsell of the Apostle, 1 *Thess.* 5. 21. *Prove all things:* And the Prophet *Esaiah*, *To the Law, and to the testimony*, *Esa.* 8. 20.

It was a good speech of Saint *Austine* to *Manichæus*, contesting with him for audience; Heare me, heare mee, said *Manichæus*; Nay, saith St. *Augustine*, *Nec ego te, nec tu me, sed ambo audiamus Apostolum, dicentem, Peccatum non cognovi, &c.*

Beloved, we may see what weak crea-

creatures we are, when truths fall downe amongſt us, and when we ſit in the Tribunall; alas, what diſtractions, what ſeverall ſtamps doe our ſeverall opinions ſet on them? what diſtinctions, limitations, qualifications! We will be ſure every one of us to handle the queſtion ſo, that it ſhall be ſo far true, as may ſtand with our owne delights, profits, aimes, and ends; We doe many times for perſonall reſpects, diſcourſe and determine of truths.

But now reduce them to the firſt truths, how doe our empty and contrary opinions, and fancies clatter and ſhiver to duſt? they fall downe before the Word of God, as Dagon did before the Arke of God; for the Scriptures are the Touch-ſtone, which will eaſily decide counterfeit gloſſes, and errours, from genuine and proper truths; Genuine truths are like the young Eagles, that can with open eyes behold the light of the Sunne, and erroneous gloſ-

ſes

ſes and opinions are like ſore eyes, which cannot behold the Sunne without twinckling, and watering, and cloſing.

And note by the way, that if the truth be the truth of God, it doth tend to theſe three things; *viz.*

1 *The glory of his rich Grace*, *Epheſ.* 1. 12.

2 *Setling of peace in the Conſcience*, Rom, 5. 1.

3 *Mortifying of ſinne*, Titus 2. 12.

4 Eſtabliſh the minde in declared truths, *Beware*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *Peter*, (*ſeeing ye know theſe things*) *leſt yee being led away with the errour of the wicked, fall away from your owne ſtedfaſtneſſe.*

It is not unknown, that ſome (like Pedlars) wander up and downe, and make a living by their errours; ſubtill people, and crafty to their owne confuſion, who have only a ſtrength of parts to gloſſe over ſins and errours, & to weaken the ſtrength of truths, and wayes to Heaven; moſt rendring

ring children of Satan, for they
eaſe not to pervert the right
ayes of the Lord, and yet ſo ar- Act. 13. 10.
ificially doe they vent their
ares, ſo neatly doe they ſet them
ut with the applauſe of reaſon,
nd carnall licentiouſneſſe, that
any weak-headed Chriſtians
wallow up their baits, drinke up
heis cups, lick in their tumultu-
us and unſetling doctrines; yea,
nd ſome of higher judgements
doe many times reele and ſtagger
t the ſame.

VVhat is the reaſon?

Surely this; The Maſter is loo-
ing the Anchor, and therefore
the Ship begins to toſſe. Men doe
not eſtabliſh their hearts in
knowne and approved truths;
they doe not confirme their faith
to what God ſaith againſt that
bewitching diſcourſe of reaſon
and liberty; they will be liſtning
to naturall reaſon, and therefore
with *Nicodemus*, break out, *How
can this be?* When men will not
ſtick to truths, it is juſt that they

should be troubled with doubts and errours.

It is the Apostles counsell, 1 Thes. 5. 21. *Hold fast that which is good.* So, 2 Tim. 1. 13. *Hold fast the forme of sound words, &c.* That is, claspe it, grasp it, maintaine it, as one would a jewell in his hands, the which another would violently force away. When the minde is rooted in truth, it will not shake with so many doubts, which will assuredly spring from erroneous Principles, and Doctrines.

Act. 15. 21 *It seemed good to the holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden then these necessary things.*

5 Meddle with no more truths then will save thy soule, and serve thy particular relations. A man may goe in a shallow water, who rises and falls, waves and slips in a deep channell. I will tell you, as all duties, so all truths doe not concerne all men: God doth not expect or require that every Christian should be a Doctor of the Chaire: Some points in Religion are high, and mysterious; others are dark, and lye yet under predi-

dition and Prophecy; but ſe parts which direct to thy ty here, and to thy ſalvation eafter, are cleare, expreſſe; he o runs may read them.

Buſie thy ſelfe moſt in theſe; dy to be a good man, and a od maſter; a good man, and a od ſervant, &c. Exerciſe thy fe to know what concernes e, and then to pray thy ſelfe in- the practiſe of that. This is a ſe way, and ſetled, and which exempted from vaine turmoiles d many judiciall doubtings.

6 Informe the Conſcience with nature of a Chriſtian, and ſa- g condition; ſome things are quired towards ſalvation, ſome ings unto ſalvation; ſome ings give a being, other things a mfortable being; Of all which a perſon had a ſpeciall and di- inct knowledge, he might walke ore quietly without feares and oubtings. Shal I give you an hint f ſome particulars? remember hen theſe Propoſitions.

Four particulars worthy of weak christians distinct consideration.

1 Preparations to Grace are different and unequall; all men are not prepared by the same degrees, or in the same manner for Christ; Conviction of the Naturall estate, and attrition, and anguish, and those legall operations, these are preparations; for men must *know* their sinfull condition, they must have the *spirit of bondage*, they must be *heavie*, and *weary*, before they can lay hold on Christ.

Rom. 7. 7, 9. Rom. 8. 15 Mat. 11. 28

Now those legall impressions are different; every Beleever (of ripe years) hath felt them, more or lesse, yet all cannot say alike. *Every childe feeles something in his birth, but some children are brought forth with more paines, and others with lesse difficulty; Lydia* was quickly delivered, but *Paul* lyes by it some dayes. Some people can say, as *David* in another case, *Sorrow endured for a night, but joy came in the morning*; Others may say as the same *David*, *Night and day thy hand was heavy upon me.*

Simile.

The

The Lord is pleased (for he is an arbitrary Agent both for the matter and manner in our spirituall alteration) to single out some persons, and to charge their sins deep upon their Consciences, and to pursue them with singular terrours, to sticke his arrowes and their owne sins so close that they know not which way to turne themselves. He doth almost grinde them to powder, and casts them to the dust, and to the lowest amazements, and distractions; and then as the skilfull Artificer, who hath bruised, and battered, and broken the masse into pieces, and throwne it into the fire, and melted it, he yet at length takes it out, and fashions from all this, a most comly, and precious, and usefull vessell: So doth the Lord many times with some people, he returnes them their old sins, and powerfully mingles the Law and their sins, and their Consciences together, and so with that hammer bruiseth, and breakes their

Some persons greatly prepared.

ſinfull hearts, and with that fire melts them, and diſſolves them as it were; yet after a long and ſad time of ſenſible conviction, and horrible bondage, he graciouſly formes the Lord Jeſus in their hearts, and renewes his bleſſed Image of Grace, and they become the moſt acceptable Veſſels of glory.

Others gently prepared.

But with other perſons he deals not in this high meaſure; he doth indeed arreſt them with the Law, but doth not ſo fetter and iron them; he doth not ſo impriſon them, but upon their falling downe he is pleaſed to releaſe them from their guilt and feares, and to *deliver them from the powers of darkneſſe, into the marvellous liberty of the Sons of God.*

Note. Therefore know this, that when God hath attained his end, he ceaſeth in this way of legall operation.

Queſt. What is his end? will you ſay.

Sol. I anſwer, his end is in theſe legall preparations;

1 To

1 To evidence unto a man the foulneſſe of his heart and life.

2 To convince him of a totall unworthineſſe.

3 To produce moſt inward diſlikes of ſuch an abominable thing as ſin is.

4 To make a man willing, upon Gods owne conditions, to take and receive Chriſt.

Legall troubles & workings ceaſe, when God attaines his end.

Theſe are the ends, which being in ſome ſooner, in others later, accompliſhed, the Lord doth ceaſe the workings of preparation.

Which is in ſome ſooner, & in ſome later.

You know that if a peece of ſtone or wood will breake with one or two blows, we ſpare the reſt; and if the Maſſe will yeeld in one dayes firing, wee then let it out. So, &c. But if yet the knottineſſe be great, and reſiſtance long, then knotty wood muſt have iterated blows, and unyeelding metall muſt have the greater fire.

Simile.

From all this, the doubtfull heart may perhaps bee ſettled a-

bout his eſtate in grace: Aske him, Doſt thou love God? I do: Serve him with all thy might, in all thy wayes? I doe: Reſt upon Jeſus Chriſt? I doe: Combat, and war againſt ſinne? I do: and yet I feare all is not right: Why? Becauſe I never had ſuch terrors as others. Now then informe thy weake judgement, If God hath ſhewn unto thee thy ſinfulneſſe; If hee hath abated thee, and emptied thee of thy ſelfe; If ſinne and thou are now at defiance; If thou haſt yeelded unto the receiving of Chriſt upon his owne termes and conditions, though thy legall preparations were not anſwerable to others, either for intention of ſtrength and meaſure, or for extention of length and time, yet thy condition is good and ſafe: For that humiliation which is accompanied with theſe iſſues, is aſſuredly bleſſed and comfortable. If the phyſick carries away the humour, though it doe not

Simile.

make

make the perſon ſo ſicke, yet it is good: And though a man want a ſtorme to drive him to ſhore, yet is he ſafe enough, if he bee landed with a ſofter gale and tide.

2 The operations of Grace are alſo different and unequall, notwithſtanding that Chriſtians may have one common principle, and the ſame externall means of grace. I beſeech you obſerve this.

1 There is one and the ſame (ſpecificall) ſeed of regenerating grace in all Chriſtians; the ſame ſpirit of holineſſe, of faith, of repentance, of love, &c. All Chriſtians are bottomed alike, and rooted alike for the ſubſtantiall part of Grace.

2 That many Chriſtians may live under the ſame meanes of Grace, as many people doe live under the ſame light and heat of the Sun, and children under the ſame parents.

3 That the exerciſes of their

graces may yet be different; As children having the same School, may sit in severall formes, and having the same food, may yet have severall agilities and abilities.

Simile.

So Christians, who have the same principles of beleeving and repenting, and praying, and doing, and who have the same Ministery, and common assistances, may yet vary and differ in the active part of graces and duties. One may know more then another, one may rest upon Gods Promises more then another, one may pray with more fervency then another, one may doe the other parts of duty more then another, &c. yet all these may have truth of grace, and may bee saved.

Therefore know, that inequality of holy operation, doth not spring from nullity or falsnesse of Grace, but sometimes from the variety of particular occasions, sometimes from the variety of

Inequality of holy operation, whence.

of particular ends, ſometimes from the variety of particular aſſiſtance. Every Chriſtian hath not alike.

1 Forcible occaſion to exerciſe his faith and patience:

Nor ſecondly, doth God intend every Chriſtian for ſome ſingular ends and ſervices, to which hee fits others by the greater improvement, and uſe of their graces.

3 Neither hath every man at all times an equall gale or breath of ſpirituall aſſiſtance to enlighten him, to excite, and affect, and draw him. I might alſo adde,

4 Neither doth every Chriſtian ſtir up the gifts and graces in him; he doth not wiſely on all occaſions and motions improve his ſtock.

5 Neither hath every man a like temper and conſtitution, which conduceth much to the actions of the ſoule.

6 Neither doth every calling ad-

admit unto every Christian those spaces, and leasures, and remissions, or vacations, which some have to set on their heavenly frame and course.

It is with true Christians as with true men: Every man hath a soule, and faculty from that soule, and actions issuing out of those faculties, yet every man is not equall in the expressive wayes of nature: So is it with Christians, all have truth of grace alike, but the exercise of it is different and personall.

Simile.

3 As the actions, so the degrees of Grace are different: Compare Christian with Christian, it is as if you should compare one branch and limbe of a tree with another; where though all be set in one common root, yet their particular measures are more and lesse. Or, as if one did compare the Starres together, where though all be interested in the heavenly orbes, yet they differ among themselves in respect of magnitude and light. Ye

Branches.

Stars.

Sheep.

Yee are the body of Chriſt, (ſaith the Apoſtle, 1 Cor. 12. 27.) *and members in particular*; this was a glorious and gracious condition: But then, verſ. 29. *Are all Apoſtles? are all Prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? doe all ſpeak with tongues?* Nay, Eph. 4. 11. *Hee gave ſome Apoſtles, and ſome Prophets, and ſome Evangeliſts, and ſome Paſtors and Teachers.* Members. 1 Cor. 12. 27. 29. Eph. 4. 11.

Now as this holds firm enough in various degrees of ſingular gifts for edification, ſo likewiſe it is as evident in thoſe ſpeciall graces for ſanctification: For, Are all in the fold of Chriſt, ſheep? There are ſome lambes: *Peter* is commanded to feed both, (*Ergo* there are both) Are all in the garden of Chriſt, Cedars? There are ſome tender Vines. Are all in the houſhold of Chriſt, ſtrong men? There are ſome young, there are ſome babes in Chriſt too. So Heb. 5. 13. and 1 Joh. 2. 12, 13, *I write unto you little chil-* As gifts for edification, ſo graces for ſanctification are different. 1 Joh. 2. 12, 13.

children, because your sinnes are forgiven you, and because you have known the Father. You see little children there, as well as young men and fathers; and these children, though children, though little children, though very tender Christians, yet they know the Father, and they had pardon of sin.

Brethren, how exceedingly do we disturb our selves with doubtings here? Many people, through a weakneſſe (I say no more) of judgement, doe fall out with their estate and condition, molest, and afflict their hearts, close up all against themselves, suspect, and foolishly reason and argue the nullity of a gracious condition, from the imperfections which they observe in their graces, from their behindments in faith, and zeale, and sorrow, &c. Ah ignorant people! who are truly industrious after the great measures of Grace, and will not yet quiet their feares,

and

and ſtill their doubtings with this; Note.

1 That ſuch earneſt pantings, and inquietations, and unſatisfiableneſſe cannot but ſpring from truth of grace.

2 Then, that where grace is in truth, though in the loweſt meaſure, there the ſoule hath intereſt in Chriſt, in all the Promiſes, in God, in Heaven, in all.

Remember this, He who hath leaſt in grace, hath not that which he would have; and hee who hath moſt in grace, hath not that which he ſhould have; and he who hath any truth of grace, hath enough to change his heart, and ſave his ſoule. I would beleeve in that fulneſſe of aſſurance and reliance as thou doſt, and if I cannot, I will yet beleeve as well as I can. Hee who ſaid, *O woman, great is thy faith*, ſaid alſo to another, not ſo ſtrong, *Thy faith hath ſaved thee*. No man miſſeth of heaven for want of meaſure, but of truth. Our

con-

consolation lyes much in the comparative degree, but our salvation is in the positive: Much grace will yeeld unto us here our heaven, and any grace, if true, will yeeld us heaven hereafter.

4 The separable fruits of true grace are different, not onely if you compare one Christian with another, but if you compare the same Christian with himselfe in divers times and occurrences.

1 If you compare Christian with Christian in respect of comfortables, it is night with one, when it is day with another: One goes on heavily oppressed, *walking in darknesse*, (that is the Prophets phrase, *Esa.*50.10.) He hath not that sensible light of divine favour, (*Thou hidst thy face*, said *David*, *and I was troubled*, Psal.30.7.) Hee hath not that sensible joy or testimony of his gracious condition, (*Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation*, Psal.51.12.) How many mourners are there:

Esa. 50.10. Light.

Psal. 30,7 Joy.

51.12.

there in Zion? Many who lament the abſence of favour, of joy, of peace.

Yet ſome others there are who doe beleeve, and doe rejoyce in beleeving: They *ſee Chriſt in their armes*, they *know whom they have beleeved*, and *rejoyce with joy unſpeakable and glorious*, 1 Pet. 1. 8. As *Simeon* As *Paul*. 2 Tim. 1. 12 1 Pet. 1. 8.

2 If you compare the ſame Chriſtian with himſelfe: For it is with our day of grace, as in this of nature, there are many eclipſes, many variations. *Job*, how thankfull, how patient, how confident? *Bleſſed bee the name of the Lord*: And, *ſhould wee receive good at the hands of God, and not evill?* And, *though he kill me, yet will I truſt in him*: Yet anon, how all ſeems to go againe! Hee curſeth the day of his birth, hee argues it with God, and expoſtulates much about the hardneſſe of his condition.

So *David*, in ſome Pſalms, all in joy, all in triumph, all in peace; God deals well with him, an-

anſwers him, revives him: yet preſently wee ſhall finde him in his teares, in his ſuſpicions, *Hath God forgotten to be gracious?* in ſecret diſputes with his ſad ſoule, Pſal. 42. *Why art thou caſt downe, O my ſoule, and why art thou diſquieted within me?*

Now this ſenſible change and contrariety in the ſoule, doth no more argue the falſeneſſe of grace, then the goings and comings of cheerfulneſſe in the body conclude the want of true life in it: The comfortables of grace are an overplus of our wages, which yet are held up ſometimes from the moſt upright ſervant.

9 A ninth cauſe of doubtings, was, the ignorance of the doctrine of Juſtification: For (you remember) that I told you this, That ſenſible guilt was troubleſome, a wounded condition was fearfull. When a perſon finds juſt cauſe of feares, many ſinnes, undeniable ſinnes, and looks all over himſelfe, and all abroad, and can finde no comforter, no one

one able to ſtep in'twixt God and his ſoule, no peace-maker, no one to lay his burden upon, hee muſt neceſſarily bee perplexed with many doubts. For the cure & remedy of which, be pleaſed to conſider of ſome particular Propoſitions, which I will lay down to unfold the buſineſſe and comforts of Juſtification unto beleeving penitents; for to theſe onely I addreſſe my ſpeech.

1 In Juſtification, our debts are charged upon Chriſt: they goe upon his account. You know that in ſinne, there is the vicious and ſtaining quality of it, and then there is the reſulting guilt of it, which is the obligation of a ſinner over to the judgement ſeat of God, to anſwer for ſin.

Now this guilt, (in which lies our debt) this is charged upon Chriſt: Therefore (ſaith the Apoſtle) *God was in Chriſt reconciling the world to himſelfe, not imputing their treſpaſſes unto them*: And, *hath made him to be ſinne for* 2 Cor. 5. 19

us,

us, who knew no ſinne. You know in Law, the wives debts are charged upon the husband; and if the debtor be diſabled, then the creditor ſues the ſurety. *Fidejuſſor*, or ſurety, and *Debitor* in Law, are reputed as one perſon: Now Chriſt is our *Fidejuſſor*, *He is made ſinne for us*, ſaith the Apoſtle: For us, (*i.*) *vice noſtra*, or *loco noſtro*, (*i.*) in our ſtead. A ſurety for us, one who put our ſcores on his accounts, our burden on his ſhoulder: So the Prophet, Eſa. 53. *He hath borne our griefes, and carried our ſorrowes.* How ſo? *He was wounded for our tranſgreſſions, he was bruiſed for our iniquities:* (*i.*) Hee ſtood in our ſtead, hee tooke upon him the anſwering of our ſinnes, the ſatisfying of our debts, the clearing of our guilt, and therefore was it that he was ſo bruiſed, &c.

Simile.

Heb. 7. 22. *Ieſus made a ſurety of a better Teſtament.*

Fidejuſſor.

Eſa. 53. 4, 5

Lev. 16, 21 Scape-goat.

You remember the Scape-goat, *Upon his head, all the iniquities of the children of Iſrael, and all their tranſgreſſions, in all their ſinnes, were*

con-

confeſſed and put. And the Goat did 22.
beare upon him all their iniquities, &c.
What is the meaning of this?
Surely Jeſus Chriſt, upon whom Chriſt.
our ſinnes were laid, and who alone dyed for the ungodly, and bare our burdens away. Therefore the Beleever in the ſenſe of guilt ſhould runne unto Chriſt, and offer up his blood unto the Father, and ſay, Lord, it is true, I owe thee ſo much, yet Father forgive me, remember that thine owne Sonne was my ranſome, his blood was the price, hee was my ſurety, and undertook to anſwer for my ſinnes; I beſeech thee accept of his attonement, for hee is my Surety, my Redemption; Thou muſt be ſatisfied, but Chriſt hath ſatisfied thee, not for himſelfe, what ſinnes had he of his owne? but for mee, (gracious Father) they were my debts which he ſatisfied for; and looke over thy book, and thou ſhalt find it ſo, for thou haſt ſaid, *Hee was made ſin for us*, and that *he was wounded for our tranſgreſſions.* Now

Now this is a great stay, a great comfort, that we our selves are not to make up our accounts and reckonings, but that Christ hath cleared twixt us and God; there-
Ephes. 1. 7 fore it is said, *Ephes.* 1. 7 that *in his bloud we have redemption, even the forgivenesse of sins.*

2 In Justification, the beleeving penitent hath an universall discharge, What is that? That is, when a man is in Christ, when he is a true beleever, he doth not then receive a particular acquittance from such or such sins, but an universall discharge from all the sins he hath committed. You
Jer. 33. 8 know the promise, *Jer.* 33. 8. *I will pardon all their iniquities whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me.* 9. *And it shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and honour, &c.*

Therefore *David* speaking of Gods fulnesse, and extent of pardoning, and remitting mercy, he
Psal. 85. 2 saith, *Psal.* 85. 2. *Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, thou hast covered*

vered all their ſins. Selah. VVhich covering of all ſin, is in ſenſe the ſame with the Apoſtles not imputing of ſin, *Rom.* 4. and 2 *Cor.* 5.

This is a true axiome, *Peccata non minuunt juſtificationem*; Though ſins be different, yet juſtification is not. VVhen the Lord God juſtifies a perſon, the different qualities and circumſtances of former ſins doe not hinder their pardon, and diſcharge. You know that one may with a pen croſſe a great ſumme as well as a little ſumme; and a King can give a pardon not only for petty offences, but alſo for rebellions and treaſons, and ſo he doth many times. It is therefore an obſervable paſſage in Holy VVrit, that there is ſcarce a ſin in any kind, but we may read the blotting of it unto a beleeving and repenting perſon, *viz.*

Simile.

Note.

Originall ſinne, which was the great deluge of our natures, and the firſt fire which inflamed the whole world of mankind, yet this ſin was pardoned to *Adam*.

Juſtification reacheth all ſorts of debts.

Drun-

Drunkenneſſe, another ſinne which the Apoſtle (in 1 *Cor.* 6. 8.) raiſeth to the height of eternall ſeparation, yet was it pardoned to *Noah*, a beleeving penitent.

Lying, another ſin, which is of it ſelfe apt to locke the gates of heaven, (*Rev.* 22. 15.) yet was it pardoned to *Abraham*, the Father of the faithfull.

Inceſt, that unnaturall commixture, yet pardoned to *Lot*.

Murder, a crying ſinne, and Adultery, a fearefull ſin, yet both pardoned unto a repenting and beleeving *David*.

Idolatry, that angering and provoking ſin, a ſin which unthrones God, and makes a god, yet pardoned unto *Salomon*.

What ſhould I mention more? Impatience, a ſinne, yet pardoned to *Job*.

Paſſion, a ſinne, yet pardoned to *Jonah*.

Denial of Chriſt, againſt knowledge and reſolution, a high ſin, (and ſuch as a Donatiſt upon no termes

termes would admit, as capable of a re-acceptation) yet graciouſly pardoned to *Peter*.

Perſecuting of the Goſpell of Chriſt, blaſphemy, and compelling of others to blaſpheme (*i.e.*) injuriouſly, and deſpitefully to oppoſe Jeſus Chriſt, his VVord, his Members; O how piercing and bleeding a ſin! yet pardoned to *Paul*, he obtained mercy.

Oppreſſion and Covetouſneſſe, by which a man doth ſucke the bloud and life of others, yet pardoned to *Zacheus*.

Nay yet once more, as you may ſee pardon in Juſtification, releaſing all ſorts of debts, ſo you ſhall finde it releaſing all ſorts of debtours. Take one place for all, in *Levit.* 4. where the Lord goes over all ſorts and diviſions of ſinners, and appointed offerings for them all, and proclaimes pardon to them all, *viz.* Firſt, the Prieſts, *ver.* 3. Then ſecondly, the whole Congregation, *ver.* 13. and 20. Then thirdly, a Ruler, *ver.* 22, 24. And all ſorts of debtors.

Then fourthly, any one of the common people, *verse* 27, 28, 31, &c.

Under which foure rankes, he drawes in all sorts and conditions of men; and not only appoints a sin-offering for them all, but also accepts of the same; by which, what is else meant but the power and efficacy of the bloud of Christ, by which all sorts of sins are pardoned to all sorts of beleeving and repenting sinners?

Object. Ah Lord! will many a person cry out. Why? what is the matter? Why art thou so heavie? Why? such and such a sin heretofore.

Sol. I reply, Is there not a Justification? Yes: And how comes sinne to be pardoned? Is it not by the bloud of Christ? Yes: But these were great sins; and did Christ dye for the expiation of little sins only? What, did he satisfie for infirmities only, and not for enormities also? And doth Christ indeed leave the greatest debts for

us

to cleare? Or cannot faith receive the acquitance of great ſins, as well as indeliberated ſinnes? Was not the ſinne-offering for all ſorts of perſons? And have not all ſorts of ſins come within the Proclamation? No, no, my brethren, Juſtification (without all doubt) croſſeth the book. Thou art a debtor, ſaith God: I am, Lord, ſaith the penitent, I acknowledge my ſins, and am ſorry for my tranſgreſſions, but I intend to run on the ſcore no longer. Thou art a debtor, ſaith God; I am, Lord, ſaith the Beleever, and thou haſt ſaid, *If any man ſin, hee hath an Advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the righteous, and he is the propitiation for ſinnes*, and I beleeve on him Lord; I take him to be my ſin-offering, and in his bloud only I ſeek for pardon and redemption from all my ſins; this were the way to ſupport our ſelves againſt our many & ſtrong doubtings about pardon of ſins; Yet the Lord knowes I have re- 1 Joh. 2. 1

pented of them, and I doe believe in Jesus Christ for the pardon of them, I heare and know that he is the Mediator of the New Testament, and that his bloud satisfies for all sorts of debtors, and debts too; though one sin may differ from another, yet his merit and satisfaction differs not from it selfe, but is all-sufficient; and therefore I acknowledge the debt, and rest on his bloud for a full discharge.

3 Discharges in Justification are not repealed, they are not called in againe. *Peccata non redeunt*, (*i. e.*) Subsequent sins and falls doe not nullifie and evacuate former grants and pardons: for as much as 1. Pardon of sin springs from speciall love and mercy, which alter not their consigned acts. 2. It is founded in an unalterable, and absolute, and constant satisfaction; for sinne is not pardoned for any dignity in the person. In the person pardoned, there is no reason or cause of par-

ardon, but that is in the blood f Christ, which blood alters and ssens, and abates not, though ur carriages do.

Hence it is that pardon of nne in Justification, is stiled *the lot ting out of the hand-writing*, Col. .14. If a writing bee blurred a ittle, and somewhat blotted, yet t may be read; but if it blotted out, it is no more legible, and who can be called to account upon record when the writings are obliterated? The same phrase is used, Esa.44.22. *I have blotted out as a thicke cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins.* Where me thinks something else falls in to our comfort, *viz.* That God himselfe doth blot out. Though an under officer should blot out an indictment, that perhaps may help nothing; but when the King doth it, who is chiefe Judge, then the indictment cannot returne.

Now it is the Lord himselfe who doth blot out transgressions; he doth it, who onely hath

power of life and death, of condemning or absolving.

In like manner, there is another phrase, Mica. 7. 19. *Thou wilt cast all their sinnes into the depths of the sea.* If a thing were cast into a river which might be fathomed, then it might be brought up againe; or if it were cast upon the sea onely, yet it might be discerned, and taken up againe; but when it is in the depths, cast into the depths, the bottome of the sea, now it cannot be fathomed up again.

By which Metaphor the Lord intends to expresse unto us the powerfull energy of pardoning mercy, that our sinnes shall rise no more against us; Hee will cleare them so, that they (being once forgiven) shall come on the account no more: Hee will drowne their guilt, that it shall not come up against us before him the second time.

Therefore *Paul* discoursing of Justification, *Rom.* 4. He useth another

another phrase to expresse this point, vers. 7. *Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.* Covered: Covering is such an action which is opposed to disclosure, and judiciall evidences, and to be covered, is to be hid so, and closed, as not to appeare with a judiciall guilt upon it.

Now the Lord here is said to cover sinne in Justification: What is that? That is, the Lord will looke on those sinnes no more with a judiciall eye, he will not call them to account any more, that is the meaning of the phrase.

As when a Prince reads over many Treasons, and meets with such and such which he hath pardoned, he reads on, hee passeth by, hee now takes no notice of them, he is not stirred, he sends not out against those whom hee hath pardoned: So, &c. This is for God to cover sinne, *viz.* not to looke on the sinne pardoned

with a judiciall eye. It is not, as ſome moſt empty and dull heads fancie it, God doth not ſee ſinne at all, and he cannot. Of all the opinions in the world, this is the moſt ridiculous and childiſh to men who beleeve an All-ſeeing God: But to cover ſinne, is not ſimply not to ſee it, but to looke it over as it were, and not to ſit or ſtand upon it with a judiciall eye, (*i.*) to account for pardoned ſins no more.

Hence in the New Covenant, God promiſing to juſtifie, or to pardon ſin, he ſaith not onely, *I will forgive their iniquity*, but addes, *I will remember their ſinne no more*, Jer. 31.34. What is that? That is, if I once forgive their ſinne, I will not forgive it againe, it ſhall not need againe to be forgiven, once ſhall ſerve the turne, I will remember it no more. The meaning is, it ſhall quite bee forgotten, I will no more plead with them for what I have once pardoned.

As the Goſpel needs to be given but once, ſo a mans ſinnes but one to be forgiven, once is enough, becauſe if once, then for ever.

I

I confesse, that the sense, and fruit, and assurance of a sin pardoned, this may (*redire*) returne; this may be lost and got, and the acts of faith concerning the particular pardon of a particular sin, may do so, but Gods justifying act, his pardoning act is a free and constant act: Otherwise if hee pardoned us respectively upon an absolute Incessation about sinne, there were no flesh living that could be justified. Note. The apprehension of pardon is variable and yet the pardon it self is immutable.

4 Discharges in Justification reach not onely to the guilt, but also to the consequents of guilt: for it is a true rule, *Justificatio tollit pœnalia.* Therefore saith the Apostle, *Rom.* 8. 1. *There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.* You know that if the body falls, then the shadow which attends the body, that falls too; and if the debt bee discharged, the prison is discharged. Wee have by the blood of Christ the forgivenesse of our sinnes, and therefore the remission of all sa- And, *remissa culpa, remittitur pœna.*

tisfying punishment: Why else doth the Apostle say, Gal. 3. 13. *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us?* As Christ is said to be *made sinne for us*, 2 Cor. 5. so is he here said to bee *made a curse for us*. Hee is made sinne for us, by taking upon him the guilt of our sinnes; and he is made a curse for us, by bearing that wrath and punishment which was due to us, because of our sins.

Nay, let mee speake a bold truth; To have sinne remitted, and yet to be exposed to punishment, (I speake onely of satisfying punishment) cannot stand with that unspotted justice of God; for no man is justly punished but by reason of unsatisfied guilt. (*In peccato fundatur reatus pœnæ*, saith *Aquinas* well.) Now if Christ hath fully and perfectly satisfied for the guilt, then punishment hath no ground, unlesse we will say that God will punish for that which is already satisfied,

or

for that Chriſts ſatisfaction is not totall, but partiall, (*i.*) he ſatisfied for a part, and left ſome parts of ſatifying puniſhment to us, which is theopinion of the Papiſts for their humane ſatisfactions.

But to draw up againe; What a comfortable ſtay and ſupport is this unto a diſtreſſed ſoule, to ſee and finde all in Chriſt? When a perſon brought to the true ſight and ſenſe of ſinne, and loathing and forſaking of it, and to the giving of himſelfe up unto Chriſt ſhall behold his many fore-paſt guilts, and ſee theſe charged upon Chriſt, nay and diſcharged by Chriſt; nay and ſo diſcharged that they ſhall never bee charged upon him againe; nay and all the conſequents of guilt removed, ſo that Chriſt hath ſet him at liberty, he hath made him a freeman, and that againſt all Satans accuſations; hee may hold out the blood of Chriſt, which will anſwer all; I am a ſinner, but *Chriſt was made ſin for me*; I de-

ſerve

ſerve damnation, but *Chriſt was made a curſe for me.* If Beleevers did skill the nature, and extent and vertues of remiſſion by the blood of Chriſt; if they did know, and were poſſeſſed more with this part of Juſtification, they would ſtrengthen their faith, and their comfort more; and their doubtings and fears would ſinke more. *Be of good comfort, thy ſinnes are forgiven thee.*

5 One thing more, which I had almoſt forgotten, fals in, which is this, That the ſubſtantiall part of Juſtification is alike to all Beleevers. What is that? It is this, God for the blood of Chriſt doth not onely charge the ſins of ſtrong beleevers on Chriſt; but of weake beleevers too, and theſe onely are not diſcharged; but thoſe alſo. True faith in any degree, may take out all the benefits of Juſtification. For as Juſtification doth not admit of degrees, no more is it made over to the degrees, but to the truth of

faith:

faith: So that not onely *Abraham*, the father of the faithfull, who was ſtrong in faith, but the father of the childe, who cryed out with teare, *I beleeve, helpe mine unbeleefe*, he alſo hath all the reall intereſts, the very ſame reall intereſts in the blood of Chriſt.

You know the arme hath not an intereſt in the head and influences therof, becauſe it is big, or becauſe it is ſtrong, but becauſe it is a member, by reaſon whereof the leaſt finger, and weakeſt member doth alſo claime and hath a ſhare. So becauſe every Beleever by true faith is made a member of Chriſt, hee hath therefore a concurrent ſhare in the blood of Chriſt in the Juſtification purchaſed by Chriſt.

And therefore it is a weaker argument of weake beleevers to deny, or doubt their diſcharge by Chriſt.

True, ſay they, Chriſt is a ſtrong Saviour, and hath ſtrong merits, and by him is pardon of ſinne, and

and by his Name a person is justified, but this is onely for men of stronger faith then mine.

Sol. Doe not deceive, nor unnecessarily afflict thy selfe, Christ hath done great matters for great sinners, and a weake faith is a joynt possessor, though no faith can be a joynt purchaser of sins remission.

And thus have I briefly informed you with some notions about that part of Justification, which respects our sinnes; there is yet another part, which respects our graces and duties; from the weakness and mixture of which, doe arise many doubtings, and such as are not to be disputed down by any thing in our selves, but onely to be answered with the doctrine of Justification.

Ob. O, saith the humbled sinner, and experienced in himselfe, what a broken estate is here! what an imperfect draught of holiness! My very light is dim, and in all my duties there is yet undutifulness; my righteousness

is

is defective, in my faith much unbeleefe, in my prayers much coldneſſe, irreverence, diſtraction; and when I have ſorrowed for my ſinnes, I may even grieve for grieving no more, and may hate my ſelfe, that I cannot otherwiſe hate my ſinnes: How can I ſtand before God, who is of purer eyes then to behold ſinne? Will the Lord accept of ſuch a perſon, of ſuch diſcharging of duties? &c.

Let me ſtop the complaint, and cloſe up the doubtings with a little more inlargement of the doctrine of Juſtification: Therefore remember,

1 Our perſons ſtand not before God in their owne righteouſneſſe, nor our owne ſervices in their owne ſtrength. Indeed the Lord requires holineſs in our natures, and holy duties from us; we are his children, we are his people, therefore wee ſhould bee holy as our Father is holy, therefore the people of his

paſture

pasture should serve him. An unholy Beleever were a monster upon earth, and an undutifull sonne is a plaine unbeleever; for though Christ did dye for those who were once rebellious, yet he dyes for none to make them licentious; So that holinesse, inherent grace is absolutely required to salvation.

To salvation I say,

But to Justification in no wise. What is that? That is, though a man cannot be saved without inherent holinesse, yet is he not justified by it; when he comes to account it with God, he may not say this, Lord, loe, here am I, see if there be any sin in my person, or defect in my holinesse; I have not offended thee, I need not any help, any mercy; my heart is totally cleane, and my duties performed at all times in every respect for matter and manner to the full as thou requirest: Enter into judgement with me if thou pleasest, I will bee tryed by my owne holinesse.

2. But

2 But in the righteouſneſſe of Chriſt, *I deſire*, ſaith *Paul*, *to be found in him, not having my owne righteouſneſſe, which is of the Law, but that which is through the faith of Chriſt, the righteouſneſſe which is of God by faith*, *Phil.* 3. 9. See more in *Rom.* 5. 19. 1 *Cor.* 1. 30. 2 *Cor.* 5. 21.

* So called, not as if the act of faith were our juſtifying righteouſneſſe, for that act is but 1. An imperfect thing. 2. A tranſient thing. 3. A part of inherent holineſſe: but becauſe faith only layes hold on, & makes us to fly unto & relye on the righteouſneſſe of Jeſus Chriſt.

There is ſuch a thing as the * righteouſneſſe of faith; it is none other then the righteouſneſſe of Chriſt: (we thinke little of it, we make little uſe of it; there is a kind of Popery in us all; wee look downeward too much on our righteouſneſſe for a Juſtification) and when we are to be pronounced juſt and righteous, when either we or our ſervices expect acceptation, it is in and by that righteouſneſſe of Jeſus Chriſt.

VVhence two things ariſe to keep doubtings and feares off, *viz.*

1 That though our holineſſe be weak, yet Chriſts is ſtrong; that

that righteouſnes which juſtifies, is ful. When we look upon our ſelves, Ah Lord! thinke we, How ſhall we appeare before God! How will he accept of us! Such poore, ſuch weak, ſuch ſinfull, hollow people! I anſwer, Chriſts righteouſneſſe is full, his Coate was ſeamleſſe; ours is made up, and ſtrangely cut, but his righteouſneſſe is compleat, and, *He is made unto us righteouſneſſe*, yea, and that *of God*, 1 Cor. 1. 30. God hath ſet him out to be our righteouſneſſe, and he juſtifies us by it.

And ſo it muſt be, or elſe we could not truly be reputed juſt.

2 Though our ſervices be weak, yet wee are juſtified by Chriſts righteouſneſſe: *Aaron* was to *beare the iniquity of the holy offerings*, *Exod.* 28. 38. Their holy offerings had ſome unholy mixtures; but *Aaron* was to beare them, (*i. e.*) he was to take the iniquities away from them, and to make the offerings accepted.

Chriſt is this *Aaron*, who by his righteouſneſſe covers all the blemiſhes, makes up all the weakneſſes

ſes in holy duties.

Therefore my brethren, in all our approaches to God, we ſhould not doubt. It is the Apoſtles own argument, *Heb.* 10. 21. *Having ſuch an High-Prieſt over the houſe of God,* 22. *Let us draw neare with a true heart, in full aſſurance of faith.* And *ver.* 23. *Let us hold faſt the profeſſion of our faith without wavering,* &c. It is as if the Apoſtle had ſaid, If men did know what a Chriſt they have, what a full righteouſneſſe there is in him, what hee doth with it, how he juſtifies their perſons, and juſtifies their ſervices, pleads for them, beautifies them, ingratiates them with the Father, they would not doubt ſo much as they doe, they would be better perſwaded of God, when they come and pray unto him.

I remember the Apoſtle hath an excellent phraſe in *Heb.* 9. 24. that *Chriſt doth appeare for us.* It is a Metaphor from a Lawyer; If a man hath a Caſe, he goes to his Law-

Lawyer, and reports all to him, desires him to undertake the whole business, and upon the committing of the Case to him, he appears for his Plaintiffe, opens the Case, pleads for him before the Judge, and the Cause is carried: So is it with Christ, he appeares for us (*i. e.*) When a poor sinner, a weak beleever comes to him, and opens his condition, his wants, his infirmities, Christ undertakes for him, he pleads for him, (he ever lives to make intercession) hee moves his Father in his behalfe, brings out his righteousnesse, his bloud and merits, and what hee did and suffered for him, &c. And thus doth Christ for every particular service, duty, and prayer for him who beleeves on him.

The tenth cause of doubtings, was, disputation against the Promises.

O, saith the troubled and fearfull soule, all these promises which you produce, and apply to my

my condition, they are nothing to me, they belong not to me; There is indeed goodneſſe, and truth, a wonderfull worth in them, and they ſuit with my condition exactly, but I may not lay hold on them; I ſhould but preſume to take the bread which belongs to children, but not to dogs, not to ſuch a ſinner as I am.

Good Chriſtian, doe but track thine owne ſpirit, or the ſpirit of any diſtreſſed in Conſcience, thou ſhalt finde this to be the laſt hold uſually of unbeliefe, namely, a reaſoning againſt Gods Promiſes; the which reaſoning is ſometimes through meere tenderneſſe of ſpirit; as when the ſoule hath arguments to it ſelfe of that force, to repreſent a preſent incapacity of any good which God hath promiſed, and till they be removed, it dares not lay hold on the Promiſes; but if they could be ſatisfied, then it is drawne in to beleeve: But ſometimes there is a reaſoning againſt the Promiſes, through

through wilfulneſſe of ſpirit, as when all the arguments of a doubting ſinner are ſo clearly reſolved, and anſwered by the expreſſe words of God, that the perſon cannot gain-ſay it; yet the perſon rather bends ſtill againſt the Promiſes, then labours to honour God in them by beleeving. This later reaſoning is an irrationall way, and unworthy of our abetting; I ſhould thinke ſuch a Chriſtians doubtings to ariſe rather from a fixed and heavie melancholly, then any other ſpeciall cauſe. Nevertheleſſe, ſomewhat to help the other Chriſtian, who argues and reaſoneth againſt the Promiſes, meerly out of tenderneſſe, and fear of his right & title, I would commend a few things to his conſideration.

1 No ſpirituall good is furthered, nor evill weakned by keeping the ſoule and Gods Promiſes aſunder. Tell me ſeriouſly, Is not all our help for ſoule and body (in the full and whole latitude of it)

it) couched in Gods Promiſes? Are they not our wells of ſalvation, and breaſts of conſolation, our ſunne and ſhield? and what veſſel hath a poore ſinner to draw with out of thoſe wels? what mouth hath he to milk out thoſe breaſts but faith? It is faith which knits the Promiſes and our conditions together; it is faith which makes them to meet each other; and till the Promiſes meet (in their vertue and influence) with this condition of thy ſoule, thou ſhalt never be helped or bettered by them: Till the plaiſter and the wound doe meet, it wil never be an helping nor healing plaiſter. Thou ſhalt be (*uti eras*) as thou waſt, and the promiſe ſhall be (*ubi erat*) where it was, it ſhall never doe thee good till thou doſt apply it.

2 It is beleeving which muſt cleare our title. O, ſaith the Chriſtian, if I knew that the promiſes belonged unto me, I would then beleeve; I anſwer,

Firſt, this is a prepoſterous courſe

course, and utterly impossible; as if there could be any wel-grounded perswasion of our interest, before we have any such interest. No, but personall perswasion is a consequent work, it cannot be the antecedent or leading worke. You must buy the Lands, before you can be perswaded that they are yours.

But secondly, if ever you would cleare your title to the promises, you must then beleeve; for it is faith which doth intitle you, and gives you interest and propriety. As the Apostle spake of a great good, *After yee beleeved, yee were sealed with the holy spirit of promise*, *Ephes.* 1. 13. that I say in this case; If ever you would be perswaded that God seales his Promises unto you, then doe you first put your seale unto the Promises: Beleeve, and then thou shalt see the good of them to be thy good.

3 The ground of a Christians beleeving Gods Promises, must not be in him who is to apply them.

hem, but only in him who makes hem. O! this is it which gra- els, and labyrinths, and ſtill di- treſſeth us, that we ſet up the grounds of faith in our ſelves, and not in God. We are loath to ac- knowledge that the ſole ground of beleeving is to be found only in that God who promiſeth.

It is ſaid of *Abraham*, when God promiſed him a childe in his old age, that *by faith he gave glory to God*: But how came he ſo to doe? the Text ſaith, *That he conſidered not his owne body now dead*, when he was about an hundred yeares old, *nor the deadneſſe of* Sarahs *wombe*; but he conſidered him who had pro- miſed, and was perſwaded that what hee *had promiſed*, hee was able alſo *to performe*; Why? This is the right courſe to elicite, or draw out our beleeving: We muſt not conſider our ſelves, but wee muſt conſider him who promiſe- eth: Our reaſons of beleeving muſt be found in him alone on whom we are to beleeve.

Rom. 4. 20

ver. 19

ver. 21

Therefore I beseech you to remember, that the Promises of God are not only objects of faith, but they are also grounds of beleeving: They doe not only containe excellent good for us, but likewise the motives to beleeve that good. Besides the goodnesse in them which respectively answers our conditions, and the presenting of that goodnesse unto us by way of gift, there is all reason conjoyned with these, to affect our hearts to lay hold on them, namely,

1 A graciousnesse, that the Lord will freely, and for his own sake doe us all that good.

2 A fidelity, that the Lord who hath graciously promised, will also faithfully performe.

And 3. Sufficiency of power in God, to make good unto us whatsoever word of goodnesse is gone out of his lips.

So that from all these, a Christian against all his doubtings may yet see ground to beleeve the

the Promiſes of God; becauſe,

1 The Promiſes are the Declarations of God for good unto us.

2 They are willing Declarations, ariſing only from the good will of our God.

3 He diſpenſeth the good in them to ſinners freely, without any worthineſſe or deſert on their parts.

4 There is not any good promiſed, which God is not willing or able to make good.

Laſtly, let any perſon beleeve on them, and he ſhall confeſſe, that faithfull is that God who promiſed, and that that God who hath promiſed cannot lye.

But now on the contrary, If you looke for grounds of beleeving in and from your ſelves, it cannot be that ever your hearts ſhould be free from doubtings; If either you make your owne worthineſſe the cauſe of beleeving, you ſhall never come to beleeve: This were not to receive

good from God, but to buy and purchase it; and it is absolutely against the nature of free promises, as also against the disposition of true faith, which empties us of our selves, and seeth the cause of all our good to be only in him who is All-goodnesse.

Or if you think that you must first finde the good in your selves which yee are to fetch from the Promises, you cannot then beleeve, you must unavoydably doubt still: because it is impossible for a sinner, or a needy Christian, ever to draw his helps out of himselfe, or to prevent the promises of God. As he cannot deserve any good from God promising, so he cannot bring any good to Gods promises. *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come yee to the waters*, saith the Prophet, *and he that hath no money: Come yee, buy and eat, yea come, buy wine and milk without mony, and without price.* If thou be a thirsty person, here is all provision freely for thee.

Esa. 55. 1

4 Another thing which I would commend alſo to doubting Chriſtians in this caſe, ſhall be this: Take ſome ſolid paines to cleare your entrance into Covenant with God; thereby you ſhall cleare your intereſt in all particular promiſes upon your occaſions.

There is a gracious Covenant (ſpoken of in the Scripture) twixt God and his people: Hee makes us to be his people, and we take him to be our God. And when that Covenant is paſſed twixt God and a perſon, that there is a mutuall acceptation; then the Lord eſtates this perſon into all the particular promiſes: As when the woman and man enter into the covenant of marriage, now all is ſetled on her, and ſhe hath title ſufficient.

Jer. 31. 33, 32. 38. Ezc. 36. 28 Hoſ. 2. 23 Heb. 8. 10

So when the Lord God and a ſinner are married to each other, when they are entred into a Covenant, Thou art my God, and none elſe, my heart is thine, my

life shall be thine, &c. The Lord saith unto such a one, And I am thine, and all my mercy is thine, my Christ is thine, my Promises thine: If thou needest any good for soule or body, all good is thine.

If this doore were unlocked, all the roomes would easily bee seene.

I assure thee, O Christian, if this were once out of doubt, that thou and God were entred into Covenant, thou wouldst not so much doubt thy title, or question thy right to apply any particular promise to any condition of exigence wherein thou lyest. *All are yours, and yee are Christs, and Christ is Gods*, 1 Cor. 3. 22, 23.

5 Lastly, consider well, whether there be nothing in a Christ which may not be able to overargue thy disputes against thy applying of the Promises. I remember that *Luther* in his Commentary on *Genesis* prescribes unto tempted persons one very compendious way to withstand all temptations whatsoever: Let Satan come any way, or the world any

Luthers speech.

any way, or ſinne move any way, doe thou anſwer all with this onely, *Chriſtianus ſum*, I am a Chriſtian; I may not yeeld to any ſinne, for I am a Chriſtian. And ſurely me thinkes this alſo might be a compendious way to reſolve the doubtings of a Chriſtian, *Chriſtum habeo*, I have a Chriſt. O Chriſtian, if thou didſt looke more on thy Chriſt, thou mightſt looke more on the Promiſes: When wilt thou remember, that as there is no comfortable looking on God without a Chriſt, ſo there will be no confident looking on the Promiſes of God without a Chriſt?

No looking on the Promiſes without a Chriſt.

Chriſt Jeſus is thy *Jacobs* ladder, thy prayers get up by him, and Gods Promiſes come downe by him: *All the promiſes of God are Yea and Amen in him*, 2 Cor. 1. 20.

There was a Book in the Revelation which none of the Elders and Worthies could open, but yet the Lambe could open it:

The Promises are a precious Booke, every leafe drops myrrhe and mercy, yet the weak Christian cannot open it, nay hee is afraid to open it, and to read his portion there: Nevertheleſſe thy Chriſt can open the Promiſes for thee, and by thy Chriſt as thou mayſt finde a way for heaven hereafter, ſo mayſt thou eſpie a way for thy comfort now.

And why, may Chriſt reply to the doubting Chriſtian, art thou afraid to beleeve? to beleeve my Fathers word, and thy Fathers word? Did hee ever faile any who truſted on him? Is hee not willing to give, who was willing to promiſe? Should hee loſe of his glory, if thou receivedſt of his grace? Or ſhouldeſt thou loſe of thy comfort, if thou ſhouldeſt beleeve in his promiſe? Doſt thou not care for his good? Why then art thou troubled? Or in good earneſt, Wouldſt thou enjoy that good? Why then doſt thou not be-

beleeve? Thou ſeeſt the worth of the commodity, but ſtickeſt at the price. Did my Father ever ſell grace or mercy to any upon the price of their owne worthineſſe? How canſt thou imagine him to anſwer thee in juſtice, who yet deals with thee upon promiſes? And if worthineſſe muſt be found, tell me, Who am I? Is a Chriſt of no worthineſſe to thee? or of no worth with his Father and thine? I have dyed for thy ſoule, I have reconciled thy perſon, I have made God himſelfe to bee thine, and therefore his Promiſes to be thine.

If thou thinkeſt that God will ſtart from his word, O thou erreſt: His Promiſe is made with Goodneſſe, is ſealed with Truth, and is ratified with my blood.

If thou thinkeſt it is an inexorable and deafe eare to thy prayers, yet conſider, it is alwayes an open and plyable eare to my merits. Come then, I once gave my ſelfe for thee, and ſince

that I have given my ſelfe to thee; Be not afraid, O thou of little faith: Looke on mee, and through mee unto a God, ſo ſhalt thou ſee him fully gracious and mercifull, and holding forth the golden Scepter to thee. Look on mee and through mee unto the Promiſes, then ſhalt thou ſee them to bee my purchaſe, and thy portion. Lay hold on them by faith, and inrich thy ſelfe with them, in ſo doing thou ſhalt pleaſe my Father, pleaſure thy ſelfe, and honour thy Saviour.

11 The eleventh ſpring of doubtings, was, the ſuſpenſion of divine favour. *Thou didſt hide thy face, and I was troubled*, ſaid *David*. O, the hiding of Gods favour is more then the hiding of the Sun, or then the withdrawments of *David* from *Abſolom*: It is even the time of our fainting, the ſequeſtration of our ſoules, and life. *Thy favour is life*, ſaith *David* againe.

Here

Here now conſider.

1 In theſe times of ſequeſtration, a man hath juſt cauſe of trouble; he ſhould be moved at it, that he cannot behold his God in that graciouſneſſe as before, in that lovingneſſe, in that light of his countenance. And verily there is not a Chriſtian really ſenſible of the divine favour, who ſhould not be as much perplexed in the clouding of it, as hee was affected and gladded in the riſing and diſcovering of it.

Beloved, it is ill with that man who can equally beare up in the abſence, as in the conceived preſence of Gods favour; who is of that hard and unperceiving temper, as not to ſolace his ſoule in finding God to bee gracious; and not to be abundantly diſturbed in not apprehending the wonted manifeſtations of his loving favour. How exceſſively diſtreſſed is the Church in the *Canticles*, that her Beloved had with-

withdrawne himselfe? And *David* doth in the violence of his distemper and jealousie (whether culpably, I know not, yet) strongly charge God (sure with much heavinesse of heart) that hee had forgotten to be gracious.

2 Nevertheless in the times of such suspension, it is an error, and a dangerous error, a fruitlesse error, absolutely to conclude against our God; or against our selves, of any present or hopefull interest in his blessed favour; Therefore remember these particulars.

1 Observe the wayes and times of the interception of divine favour. This is certaine, that God hath ever some speciall end in the holding up of his countenance; and we may, and doe many times give him just cause and reason. In Scripture wee may observe on our part ordinarily two occasions.

1 Some grosse sinnes, which in-

indeed are as a thicke cloud to hold up the bleſſed light of Gods countenance, for he is of purer eyes then to behold ſinne. Theſe are the wall of ſeparation, theſe ſhut the doore, and draw the curtaines, and doe like ſome cloſing rheume fall upon the eye, and indiſpoſe it to the comfortable enjoyment of the light: As wee may ſee in *Davids* two great ſinnes of Adultery and Murder, they did ſuſpend the preſence, (*i. e.*) the comfortable preſence of God, and held up the joy of his ſalvation, which hee did ſo earneſtly deſire to be reſtored, *Pſal.* 51. 11, 12.

2 Remiſneſſe and careleſneſſe in our eſteems and affections towards him in his Ordinances. When Chriſtians come to a moderation, to a cooling of their ſpirituall fervour, to a more negligent acquaintance with God, and a more indifferent performance of holy ſervices and duties; then the Lord holds back, and

and calls in the sensible light of his countenance: As a father doth alter the set of his looks towards his childe, who is wanton upon his love, and lets downe the diligence of his just observance and duty.

See this in Cant. 5.2. *Open to mee* (saith Christ) *my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled.* Here was a gracious intreaty, and full of wooing compellations: What doth the Church now? Surely she stirs, she riseth, she runneth, she easily imbraceth these calls of Christ; No, vers. 3. *I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?* What is this? She was careless, negligent, full of excuses, so those phrases import, of putting off the coat: For as the keeping on of cloaths was a signe of care and watchfulnesse, [*Nehem.* 4.23.] so the putting them off was a signe of drowzinesse, of a disposition prepared for sleep or rest: Nay (shee had washed

waſhed her feet) which was another ſigne of her ſleepy and negligent diſpoſition; It being the manner in thoſe hot Countries (where ordinarily they went bare-footed) to wash their feet after their travel, and ſo prepare themſelves to reſt. The meaning of all which, is this: She made many pretences and delayes; all which did ſpring from an acquired ſluggiſhneſſe and remiſneſſe of ſpirit.

Now marke the iſſue, Though the Church did not riſe to open, yet Chriſt, *verſ.* 4. puts in his hand at the hole of the doore: (*i.e.*) Though ſhee had neglected him in his Miniſtery, yet he ſent into her heart a notable *item* of it by his Spirit, and then her bowels were moved for him. Why? What is the matter? Now *ſhe roſe*, verſ. 5. *and opened the doore*, verſ. 6. *But my Beloved had withdrawne himſelfe, and was gone; I ſought him, but could not finde him; I called him, but he gave me no anſwer.*

Here

Here you see, that careleſneſſe of duty cauſeth abſence of favour: And when men are negligent in the entertainments of the meanes of grace, God doth in a juſt wiſdome goe off with the ſenſible preſence of his gracious favour.

2 Obſerve the wayes of regaining Gods favour ſuſpended from us: What are thoſe, will you ſay?

I anſwer:

1 Be affected for the loſſe; every abſence of Gods countenance ſhould trouble us, but the loſſe of his favour that ſhould grieve us. So was it with the Church there, Cant. 5. 4. *My bowels were troubled for him*; Or, my bowels ſoonded, rumbled, made a troublous noiſe. What doe theſe words intimate but an eminent diſquietneſſe, an hearty ſorrow for ſo great a loſſe, ſpringing from ſo great a remiſneſſe? I ſay an eminent diſquietneſſe; For where bowels are mentioned, there an eminent degree is ſuggeſted, either of com-

mi-

miſeration; as in that of God to *Ephraim*, *Jer.* 31.20. or of ſingular love and affection, as of the mother to the childe, or of moſt ſorrowfull affliction, as here.

Nay, ſo great was this ſorrow and bewailment, that *verſ.* 6. her ſoule failed when he ſpake; *My ſoule failed* (*i.e.*) my ſoule went forth, it was gone, it departed, becauſe of the departure of Chriſts loving favour: For as the heart is ſaid to goe forth when men are aſtoniſhed with feare, ſo the ſoule is ſaid to goe away, when men are ſurcharged with griefe and ſorrow. Whence it is evident, that the Church was almoſt dead for her ſolly and negligence, whereby ſhee had cauſed her Chriſt to withdraw himſelfe.

And ſurely if negligent, and regardleſſe entertainments of God, or Chriſt, or his Word, (which cauſe the ceſſation of favour) are thus abundantly bewayled with bowels and faintings,

ings, how much more should the bowels be doubled, and the measures of griefe and repentance be swelled, when the suspension of Gods love and favour is caused by our injurious handling of his blessed Spirit, by fighting against his motions, and presuming against the directing and convincing light, to dishonour and grieve him with the most foule iniquities.

Yet if wee can humbly and throughly bemoane our losse, and repent of our sinnes, we shall behold the Lord in mercy and love againe. *David* could not but yeeld out the countenance of his favour to *Absolom*, though an untoward sonne: If the clouds did breake, the Sunne would shine againe; for God will not only give, but restore comforts to his mourners.

2 Revive thy uprightnesse, and then God will renew his favour. *A good man* (saith *Salomon*, Prov. 12. 2.) *obtaineth favour of the Lord*:

Lord: (*i. e.*) An upright man, a man whoſe heart is ſingle, (for he is oppoſed to the man of many devices) whoſe heart is ſingle and plaine with God in his walkings, ſuch a man ſhall obtaine favour from the Lord.

David aſſures us of it, *Pſa.* 5. 12 *Thou Lord wilt bleſſe the righteous, and with favour wilt thou compaſſe him as with a ſhield.* It was a good ſpeech of *Davids*, Pſal. 36. 9. *With thee is the fountaine of life, and in thy light ſhall we ſee light.* *q. d.* Lord, thou haſt comfort and favour enough, thy favour indeed is life, the very fountaine of it, and in the light of thy paths ſhall the ſonnes of men ſee the light of thy favour.

For, brethren, we cannot ſee light by darkneſſe, light muſt be ſeen by light; and whatſoever is contrary to light, is an impediment of ſeeing. Gods favour cannot be ſeen by any thing which is contrary to Gods nature. Crooked hearts, and crooked wayes,

Pſa. 17. 15 *I will behold thy face in righteouſneſſe.* Note.

wayes, an heart and an heart, a tongue and a tongue, a life and a life, (*i. e.*) a doubling heart, and a doubling tongue, and a doubled converſation, which hath a veine of ſinfulneſſe and approbation, this the Lord hates and abhorres; for God is ever ſingle in all his dealings with men: They ſhall have mercy, or they ſhall not have it; and ſo he exceedingly delights in the ſimplicity of Chriſtians: Let them deal ingenuouſly with him, give him all the might they have, and him only, though they have not a preſent ſight, yet they have a ſure promiſe of his favour.

The Lord will meet them, *Eſa.* 64. 5. *Thou meeteſt him that rejoyceth and worketh righteouſneſſe, thoſe that remember thee in thy wayes.* Walke thou towards God in uprightneſſe, and God will walke towards thee in comfortableneſſe. Be thou a ſonne, and he will be a Father; give him thy heart, and he will ſhew to thee his face.

There-

Therefore let us caſt about, not only for our generall, but alſo for the ſervices of our particular callings and relations, in which if the Lord ſees us upright in walking, we ſhall aſſuredly finde him to be gracious in diſtributing the beames of his favour unto our ſoules.

3 Earneſtly ſeeke Gods favour.

1 Seeke it by enquiries in the ordinances of his favour. *Saw yee him whom my ſoule loveth?* ſaid the Church in her loſſe, *Cant.* 3. 3. unto the Watch-men. And as *Mary*, *Joh.* 20. 13. weeping, *They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him*: And ver. 15. *Sir, if thou haſt borne him hence, tell me where thou haſt laid him, and I will take him away.* What came of this? See *verſe* 16. *Jeſus ſaith unto her, Mary*; It was one only word. but enough to make her turne her ſelfe, and ſay, *Rabboni.* So may it, and ſo doth it oft-times fall out with us, in our ſeekings of Gods favour,

favour, The Lord doth meet us and shew himselfe, with his loving countenance, in his Ordinances: For these Ordinances of God, they are the Exchange, the heavenly Exchange twixt God and his people, wherein they present unto him their duty, and he conferres on them his grace and favour; So that they who have come hither with sighs, *O that God would be my God!* have returned with Psalms of joy, *The Lord is my God, and my Father, I will praise thee, O Lord my God.*

2 Seeke it by prayers. How abundant is *David* in this kind? Psal. 106. 4. *Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people, O visit me with thy salvation.* 5. *That I may see the good of thy chosen.* So *Psal.* 31. 16. *Make thy face to shine upon thy servant.* So *Psal.* 4. 6. *Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us:* For God hath promised his favour, and therefore his people may seek his favour. Nay, he hath commanded his

people to ſeeke his favour, and
erefore they ſhould ſeek it. See
l. 27. 8. Thou ſaidſt, *Seek yee*
face, My heart ſaid unto me,
y face (Lord) will I ſeek. It is an
adviſed folly in the ſuſpenſion
Gods favour, to unſonne our
ves, and unpeople our ſelves,
i. e.) to deny that grace and
pirituall relation twixt us and
God. This is not the way to gain
vour, for when wee have un-
one our relations of children,
e exclude our ſelves from the
expectations of favour; No, the
wiſeſt and ſureſt way is to ſeeke
the renewing of Gods loving
countenance, and ſay as *David*,
Lord, thou haſt hid thy face, and I am
troubled, yet thou biddeſt me to
ſeek thy face, and, *Thy face (Lord)*
will I ſeek: Nay I doe ſeeke it, for
Thy favour is life, nay, *Thy favour*
is better then life; ſo I eſteeme it, ſo
I acknowledge it, and as my life,
as that which is a life unto my
life do I earneſtly deſire it; there-
fore, Lord, *Make thy face to ſhine,*
and

and behold me againe, as thou beholdest thy people with thy ancient favour: O visit me with thy salvation, and let me see the good of thy countenance.

Now here take in two helpfull advices more, *viz.*

Two things to be remembred in our seeking of Gods favour.

1 When you seek the light of Gods countenance, doe not blind your eyes; Remember still, that a man who will shut his eyes, shall hardly finde: Now nothing can see Gods favour but the eye of faith, for in Christ Jesus only we see, and discern him our gracious God and Father; therefore keep open that eye. The direct workings of faith can alwayes see God, and the reflexive, will at length see God to be my God. When thou comest unto him thus. Lord, I doe need, I doe prize, I doe desire thy favour and countenance, and thou hast promised it, but thou wilt not keep thy promise, thou wilt never shew the light of thy countenance to my soule more; now though wee seeke much, no marvaile we finde not,

Simile.

and

he Heavens to open; you muſt uſe the key, as well as the hands, if you will come in and ſee the roomes: Our hands of Prayer muſt uſe the key of Faith, if wee would open the countenance of God towards us; for faith is that which gives us our ſights of God, and Chriſt.

2 Judge not of the iſſue by what thou feeleſt, but by what God promiſeth; and in caſe therefore that God doth not ſhew thee his ancient love preſently, or eaſily, yet knock againe, and provoke thy heart to out-beleeve all reaſonings of feare and corruption.

As *David*, Pſal. 42. 11. *Why art thou caſt downe, O my ſoule? and why art thou diſquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I ſhall yet praiſe him, who is the help of my countenance, and my God.*

O my God, ſaith he, in verſ. 6. of that Pſalme, *my ſoule is caſt downe within me* (no queſtion but for the abſence of Gods favour, verſe 7.

My rock, Why hast thou forgotten me? therefore (saith he) *will I remember thee.* Remember him, O *David!* What incouragements so to doe? Thy rocke seemeth to forget thee, and all his waves and billows are gone over thee, thou art in a tossed, and forgotten condition, and yet thou sayest, *I will remember thee.* Now see vers. 8. *Yet the Lord will command his loving kindnesse in the day time, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life.*

q. d. It is true, these afflictions and sorrows are upon me, and God seems to forget me for present, yet I will remember him, I know hee thinkes on me, he hath loving kindnesse, and hee will command it, he can shew it when he pleaseth, I shall assuredly have it, perhaps in the day time, perhaps in the night time, and therefore day and night will I seeke him, for his loving kindnesse, I will remember him.

Ch. But how may one support himselfe

ſelfe in the interims of this ſuſpenſion of divine favour? Can one be good, who is thus? Or will God doe good, or doth hee thinke any good of ſuch a one?

How to ſupport our ſelves in the interim.

Sol. I anſwer, you may ſupport your ſelves thus:

1 By remembring the dayes of old, Pſal. 77. 7. *Will the Lord caſt off for ever, and will he be favourable no more?* 9 *Hath God forgotten to be gracious? This is mine infirmity.* q.d. For me thus to conclude, that God will not be favourable and gracious unto me, becauſe I feele him not ſo, this is my weakneſſe, and ſinfull error: But how then will you ſupport your ſelfe? See verſ. 10. *I will remember the yeers of the right hand of the moſt High,* 11. *I will remember thy wonders of old.* And aſſuredly the remembrance of what God hath done, is able to ſupport us with a confident expectation of what God will yet doe for us.

I had his favour once, and am in it ſtill, and ſhall have it againe.

If wee remember the dayes of

old, the method of Gods former proceedings and behaviours towards us, we ſhall acknowledge, and ſo comfort our ſelves, that when he withdrew, it was a withdrawment either of neceſſity or expediency, and his loving countenance hath riſen againe without a cloud, after a night of ſorrow, after a day of ſeeking.

For the ſuſpenſions of his favour are temporary, though his truths be eternall. *I will come againe*, ſaith Chriſt: And, *it was but a little* (ſaid the Church, *Cant.* 3.4.) *that I paſſed from them, but I found him whom my ſoule loveth.*

2 Thou art in favour, though thou feeleſt none: And though thy comfort be in the feeling of it, yet thy happineſſe is in the being of it: Thou art ſaved becauſe God loves, not becauſe thou perceiveſt that love.

2 Tim. 2. 19. *The foundation of God ſtandeth ſure, the Lord knoweth who are his.* He knoweth them in reſpect of the freeneſſe of his election,

election, and in reſpect of the immobility of his affection; He knowes them ſtill, but they know not him ſtill. *Is Ephraim my deare ſonne?* Jer. 31.20. *q.d.* He is ſo, but he thinks I thinke not ſo.

Sometimes the walking child holds the parent, and ſometimes the parent holds the child, there is ſafety in both reſpects, for whiles either I hold, or am held, I am ſafe: So is it with us and God, ſometimes we lay hold on him by faith, ſometimes (nay all times) he layes hold on us by his love; our ſalvation is in this, that we are Gods, and God is ours; that he hath our hearts, and wee his love, though alwayes wee ſee it not.

3 Thou ſhalt have favour, though now it bee drawne up: He will behold thy upright heart, and thou ſhalt ſee his face with joy, Eſa. 45. 8. *In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlaſting kind-*

neſſe will I have mercy on thee, ſaith the Lord thy Redeemer.

Therefore the Church elegantly, Micah 7.8. *Rejoyce not againſt me, O mine enemy; when I fall, I ſhall ariſe; when I ſit in darkneſſe, the Lord ſhall bee a light unto mee. 9 He will bring me forth to the light, and I ſhall behold his righteouſneſſe.* Remember this one thing, Upright, and beleeving perſons have alwayes a favourable God, though they have not alwayes the ſenſe of Gods favour; yea though Satan doe teſtifie the contrary, which is the next ſpring of doubtings, and comes in now fitly to be handled.

12 A twelfth ſpring of doubtings, was, the crediting of Satans teſtimony about our ſpirituall condition, and intereſts in God and Chriſt; to which if any diſtreſſed Chriſtian doth hearken and attend, hee ſhall never bee freed from inquietations, and rowlings of minde, becauſe Satans teſtimony is ever directly

or

or obliquely againſt the truth and comfort of our ſpirituall eſtate.

For the remedy and cure of which ſpring, be pleaſed ſeriouſly to conſider of theſe ſubſequent concluſions.

1 The finall tryall of our eternall eſtate doth immediately and ſolely appertaine to the Court of heaven. Indeed the diſquiſitive part belongs to us, but the deciſive part belongs to God: Wee ought to ſearch and prove our ſelves, but no man hath immediate power to decide his eſtate, by acquitting or condemning himſelfe. This muſt bee done by the voice of God in his revealed Word, which commands and forbids, and therefore abſolves or binds.

A twofold triall of a mans eſtate.

No ſubject you know hath this power, to releaſe or binde of himſelf, but that is the royall prerogative of the King. It is true, if the Word condemne us, then our conſciences may doe ſo

too; and if the word absolve us, so may our consciences too; But this is *virtute prima*, not *virtute propria*; It is because the Word doth it, not because Conscience of it selfe without the Word can doe either rightly.

Whence two things arise to informe and direct us, *viz.*

Satans judging is but usurped.

1 Satans judgement of our estate is but usurped: It doth not belong to him to sit upon our soules: It is against the Law of Nations, that the same party should be witnesse and judge: And wee may say to him truly, what the Pharisees proudly objected to Christ, *By what authority doth bee these things?* Or as they to *Moses*, *Who made thee a Judge over us?* Assuredly the enemy of salvation is not to bee the Judge of it, he being so maliciously vowed against our happinesse, it is most unfit for him to decide it; and therefore though he usurps a judgement upon Christians, yet as *David* spake in another case,

Thou

Thou Lord wilt not leave the righteous when he is judged: no assuredly, Satan shall one day be judged for taking upon him the judging of Gods people: And doe you thinke that Satan will give a true judgement unto us of our spirituall condition, who dares give in false evidence before God himselfe of *Job*, and who is said to accuse the brethren before God day and night?

2 No testimony is to bee admitted, which is contrary to the judgement of the Word; *Beleeve not every spirit*, 1 Joh. 4. 1. *but try the spirits whether they are of God.* The Word must judge us another day, and therefore it is to judge of us now. Satans judgement is usurped, and our owne is oft times erroneous, as in wicked and presumptuous sinners, who sentence well for their safety, although God doth proclaime and pronounce bitter woes unto them.

All judgement of our estates being contrary to the Word, is false.

And as our judgements are oft-times erroneous, so are they in the

times of distresse, suspicious and hasty: We doe not testifie of our selves with judgements cleared, and totally informed by the Word, of all our estate, but with judgements affected and distempered; as *David* in his fit, *I am cast out of thy presence*; God did not cast him off, but his distempered judgement did cast him out.

2 Maintaine the judgement of the Word, against all judgement: when a man hath throughly viewed and pierced into the secrets of his heart and wayes, by the informing light of Gods blessed Spirit, and takes his flesh and spirit asunder, I meane his sins, weaknesses, graces and dispositions, and layes these, with all he knowes of himselfe, before the Lord in a most sincere ingenuity, so that if he were now to dye, he durst venture the eternall salvation of his soule, with his God, that he keeps nothing back, either of what is his owne by nature, or of what is Gods by grace:

If

If now the Word decides for him that his condition is heavenly, his heart is upright, he is indeed one who is truly intereſſed in Chriſt; this man or woman ſhould now uphold this deciſive teſtimony of the Word, lay it up as the great copy of his eternall ſalvation; and in caſe of oppoſite verdict and teſtimony, not to moleſt himſelfe with reaſoning and doubting, but to preſerve the authority of Gods teſtimony, by beleeving, and moſt upright walking with God in all the powers of duty.

There yet remaine two ſprings of doubtings to bee cured, and then I have done with that ſubject.

13 The thirteenth ſpring of doubtings, was, the new riſing of old ſins: This I told you could not but amaze the ſoule, to ſee the dead riſe out of the Grave againe, and to read the debt as if it were not yet croſſed: It doth exceedingly diſquiet us about our ſpiri-

spirituall condition. Now consider,

Five times in which former sins may revive

1 There are five times when we and our sins doe meet.

1 One is the day of our legall humiliation, when the Law, like searching Phisick, enters deepe, stirs up the evil humour, casts our sins into our very faces, and sets them in order before us, and reproves us for them, with undeniable conviction and horrour.

2 Another is, the day of our piercing afflictions, when the Lord doth send his messengers of wrath unto us, cuts off from us our delights, teares away our joyes, crosseth us in our aimes, and we see God hewing our friends from us, our children from us, our earthly delights and contents: for miserable evils are oftimes a cause to make us see our sinfull evils: We doe many times come to perceive our faults, by our punishments: As *Pharaoh* did, when the plagues were on him, *I have done evill in not letting the people goe:*

goe: And *Balaam*, when he ſaw the Angel, and heard him threatning, *I will now returne*: And ſo the children of *Iſrael*, then ſaw, and confeſt their murmuring, and ſtubbornneſſe, when God ſent evill Angels amongſt them, (*i. e.*) ſome meſſengers of his wrath and diſpleaſure.

3 A third is, the time of ſome horrible and common judgement, whether it be upon particular perſons, or a Nation, intereſſed in the ſame guilt of ſinne with our ſelves; For this is a time of common fire, which raging and flying up and downe, makes men run into their cloſets, and bring out their concealed jewels; ſo doe common and extraordinary judgements return us into our ſelves, and gives up unto us thoſe our hidden ſinnes which we feare will draw the ſame fire of judiciall wrath upon our owne perſons. I doe not doubt but at the laſt great Plague, many of the ſinfull botches broke out, upon a

feare

feare leſt that judiciall botch ſhould have broken in upon your bodies and houſes.

4 A fourth time is, the time of death? for though ſin and a ſinner really meet in all their courſe of life, yet ſenſe of ſin and a ſinner doe not alwayes meet untill the day of death; for death is a ſtrict and unavoydable ſummons to give up our accounts, and then the unjuſt Steward muſt looke about him, how he ſhall anſwer his moſt juſt Lord and Maſter.

This time of meeting, evidently manifeſts it ſelfe to our owne experience; who though we have kindled our ſinnes in the time of our health and ſtrength, yet have wee not met with the flaſhes of them but in the times of ſickneſſe and weakneſſe.

5 A laſt time of meeting is, the day of Judgement; and this is a moſt certaine and infallible time; It is poſſible for a man to eſcape the legall meeting, by conviction; and the miſerable meeting, by

afflicti-

afflictions, judgements, and death it ſelfe; (for ſome dye like *Nabal*, they live wretchedly, and dye ſenſleſly) but at the Day of Judgement, they and their ſinnes muſt meet, and ſhall; becauſe then the ſecrets of all hearts ſhall bee diſcloſed, and Gods righteous judgement ſhall be evident to the hearts of all the world. Whence it is, that in this day of meeting, *they ſhall cry unto the mountaines to fall on them, and the rocks to hide them* (but in vaine) *from the wrath of him who ſits upon the throne.*

Divers cauſes of ſins riſing afreſh.

2 There are ſeverall cauſes of the riſing of ſin: Some are on Gods part, ſome on our part, ſome on Satans.

1 For Gods part; God doth many times cauſe our former ſins to riſe, by the power of his mighty ſpirit in the miniſtery of his Word: For whereas the ſinner would huſh his feares, and griefs, and Conſcience aſleep, yet the Lord will not have it ſo; he doth rub the ſore, and gall the Conſcience,

science, makes it sensible of the guilt and wounds; he doth pierce by the two-edged sword of his Word, even to the dividing asunder of soule and spirit, and of the joynts and marrow, and discerns the very thoughts and intents of the heart. He meets the person oft-times many yeares after the commission of the sins, and most expresly revives and remembers them in all the acting circumstances, which the sinning person either had, or would have buried in silence and forgetfulnesse.

2 For our part: Thus there is double cause of new rising of old sins, one whereof is good, and the other is bad.

1 A new commission of the old sins, which brings back upon us the sting of the old guilt; for relapses into the disease, occasion a relapse of the burden and ache: Cut thy finger againe, and it will smart againe; fall into thy Ague againe, it will make thee shake againe; Relapses have ever this judge-

judgement with them, that they make a freſh wound, and the old alſo to bleed againe. You know in ſome Wells there are two buckets, put downe the one, and you bring up the other; ſo the falling into the ſame ſin againe, brings up the old burden againe.

2 Renewed humiliations; for then we doe voluntarily looke back upon our former accounts, that thereby we may more humbly ſue out a totall diſcharge. Though we may ſin the ſinne over no more, yet we may weep it over and over; and though the acting of it may be no more, yet the bewailing of it ſhould laſt us ever.

Though we may not revive ſinne to practiſe it, yet we may to mourne for it.

3 On Satans part, who like an envious and malicious wretch never gives over to throw unto us our errours and failings, though corrected with trueſt reformation. So Satan, who is the great cauſe and incentive to ſinne, will not ceaſe after our trueſt repentance, to vex, and ſad, and (if he could,

could, to) despaire our hearts with the fresh memory of former and forsaken sins; so that we seldome or never lay hand on a blessed promise, or gaine our selves into the comfortable favour of God, or delight our selves in the sweet peace of Conscience, but he falls in, and checks, and troubles us with the representations of former sins, and perchance makes us let goe our gracious hold, with the feares, and suspicions, and chargements of former guilts.

3 Now according to the variety of the causes, fetching up upon us our former guilts, must we deliver unto you severall helps and remedies.

The ends of reviving of sin.

Consider therefore, on Gods part, there are severall ends in respect of severall persons, why he brings on the sinnes againe.

1 To make the ground-worke more deep and sure: Wee make our tents too short for our wounds;

ounds; We sin much, and defile ur selves much, and we thinke hat a little washing will serve he turne. O! this businesse of elfe triall, of laying the axe to he root of the tree, of diving nto the secrets of sin, of applying he corrasives unto the core and heart of our natures, this goes against us, we are quickly weary of it.

Indeed, some trouble, and some bitternesse we grant to be convenient; but to be still accusing our selves before God, still to be lashing and wounding our hearts for wounding of God; Ah, this, this goes against us.

You shall see people sometimes very sensible of their diseased bodies: O now some Physicke were good, they finde such aches, such distempers, surely some Physicke were good; and some they take, which makes them excessively sick; but then away with it, no more physick: yet at length the disease comes upon them againe, and the

Physi-

Physician prescribes more physick, even that which must goe to the root of the disease, which though it makes them more sicke, yet it procures their safety, and better health.

Beloved, God would have men, (perhaps) a longer space to sit upon their sins; they stint themselves after great sinnes, and make themselves friends with God presently. Now the Lord knowes that this skinning of the sore will spoil all, & therefore after a short time he returnes them their sins againe, makes conscience to startle at the guilt againe, and deals with us as the skilfull Chirurgion with a man whose leg is broken, and ill set, he breaks it againe, that it may be well set.

So doth the Lord, he breaks our soules againe with the guilt of sins; He will make us know, that we must bring him more broken hearts; we shall know what it is to sin against him, and shall not make a reall & lasting peace without

ut a ſound & ſolid humiliation.
And truly this is the great mer-
y of his wiſdome to work thus;
or hereby he makes our founda-
ion low, and ſure, and hereby he
revents ſubſequent ſtirres, and
akes way for our ſurer and more
omfortable apprehenſions and
pplications of his love in Chriſt.
You know that a wiſe Schoole-
maſter, when a boy skips from a
hard leſſon to that which is more
eaſie, he puts him back again, and
makes him ſay it over and over,
ere he takes it forth. Men think to
be catching at Chriſt, however
they love to lay load on him, and
throw their vile burdens upon
him, though perhaps they never
yet weighed their vile ſinnings,
and diſhonourings of God; but
the Lord will turne them back a-
gaine, he will take off theſe prag-
maticall preſumers, and ſet them
to learne their firſt leſſon better:
He will make them more ſenſible
of their vile hearts, and waies, and
actions; they ſhall not ſo eaſily
come

come off from their accurſ transgreſſions; the Lord wi hold up the comfortable anſwe of his favours, and the ſwe taſtes of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, an make them againe to ſit down in bitter ſorrow for piercing the Lord Chriſt, and ſhedding his blood, and grieving of his Spirit, and all that men might bee more humbled, and more really fitted for Chriſt.

2 To make us more humble: I aſſure you oft-times our very victories make us proud, and that very grace which ſhould be a cauſe to abaſe us, occaſionally and accidentally is a means to puffe us: we riſe too often above our ſelves, beyond meaſure: And therefore as to *Paul* there was given a ſting to abaſe him, leſt he ſhould be over-exalted; ſo to many Chriſtians the Lord doth returne unto them the ſenſible ſting of ſome notable guilt, to abaſe their hearts, to put them in minde of themſelves.

And that we might beſtow our tears, & not our tongues on others ſinning.

For

For this reduction of former guilt, it gives up unto us our baſe and treacherous natures, and the births of our owne hearts; Ah! ſaith ſuch a perſon, this heart, this nature of mine, what was it? what is it, if the Lord leave it? See here the grapes the ſoure grapes of this wild-vine, little reaſon have I to be ſo highly conceited of my ſelfe, as long as I perceive ſuch loathſome accounts and iſſues from my ſelfe.

And verily, it makes us oft-times to deſpiſe our ſelves, to abhor our ſelves in duſt and aſhes: And this is one great end & uſe which the Lord makes of former ſins, To keepe the heart in a very humble frame: we muſt have ſomething or other ſtill put unto us of our own, which will let us ſee how fooliſh we are by nature, that is *Davids* phraſe, and how brutiſh we were, that is *Solomons* phraſe.

Our preſent graces make us good, and the ſenſe of former ſins keeps us humble

3 To make us more carefull: For the ſharp remembrance of ſin

ſin doth in a godly heart worke ſtronger deteſtation, and ſtronger watchfulneſſe: God doth make their new conſiderations to bee their preſent preventions; Future commiſſions of ſin, are many times prevented by new impreſſions of former ſins.

Remembring the gall and the wormwood. *Lam.* 3.

What? ſhould I ſinne thus againe? ſaith the humble heart; have I not reaſon to cruſh theſe births? to crucifie that bitter root, to pray againſt it, to watch againſt it, to reſiſt it, to deny it, which hath beene, and is now a ſword in my conſcience?

But now conſider that there is a double carefulneſſe wrought by the new riſing of ſin.

1 One reſpects the guilt of it, and here our care is to get our acquittance renewed and inlarged. O how doth the Lord by theſe riſings of ſin, ſoon cauſe the ſoule to riſe up in ſuing out his grace and favour! It cauſeth many a teare, many a prayer, many a wreſtling with God, many preſſings

ſings upon the promiſes, many an earneſt beſeeching to have our pardon and diſcharge more fully ſealed unto our conſciences, by the blood of Jeſus Chriſt, and teſtimony of the Spirit.

2 Another reſpects the ſinnes themſelves, in their corrupt qualities, and inclinations, and motions; and this is a greater ſtudy againſt them: firmer reſolutions, ſtrengthning of covenants, confirmations of grace, of circumſpection, of deteſtation, of reſiſtance, of any thing or way by which the powers of ſin may bee more ſubdued and caſt down.

4 To make us more thankful; Perhaps the Lord hath pardoned thoſe ſins which riſe anew in thy heart; they doe not alwayes riſe, becauſe God hath not diſcharged their guilt, but becauſe thou haſt not diſcharged thy new debt; they ariſe as a debt, for the diſcharge of a debt; as wee uſe to put men in minde of their former miſeries, not that thereby they are made

miserable, but because thereby they should be made thankfull. Beloved, to have former sins discharged, it is mercy, I say mercy, yea and a rich mercy, greater then to give a condemned person life, or to give an imprisoned person liberty, far greater: No such mercy as that which blots out our sins, which saves a soul from hell, and gives it pardon and life. Now great mercies should be answered with great thankfulnesse: Thou didst, in the sense and sting of thy guilt, goe with an heavy heart, with bitter sighs, with deep oppressions, O that I had mercy! O this burden! O this wound! O this sin! Yea, and with deepe protestations; If the Lord will but pardon it; If he wil shew me mercy; If he would receive me graciously, he should have the calves of my lips, I would love him indeed, I would serve him, I would praise and thanke him, I would speake good of his name, I would say, *Who is a God like him, that forgiveth* mi-

iniquities, tranſgreſſions and ſins, and paſſeth by the ſins of his people?

Well, the Lord hath ſhewed himſelfe like himſelfe, a God very gracious and mercifull; but wee perhaps have ſhewed our ſelves like our ſelves, in diſtreſſes, earneſt and full of promiſes; but in our exemptions, flat, and full of forgetfulneſſe. Now the Lord doth exceedingly diſlike this vanity and doubling of heart; he loves that mercy ſhould bee ſtill acknowledged to bee mercy? hee would have us to looke backe, as well as to looke up, and to give him thanks for that mercy, for which not long ſince wee would have given all the world, and our ſoules too: And therefore doth he caſt unto us our accounts, hee lets us thereby ſee what they were and what they have done, that we may confeſſe our errour for not anſwering great mercy with great thankfulneſſe.

But perhaps you will inquire, What if we our ſelves for our part

be the cause of reviving of former guilt, and sting of former sins?

I answer, If it be by way of humiliation, to seek the pardon, and to make confession to the God of mercy, and to get victory over them, this should no way discourage us; for this is no more hurt or prejudice to the soul, then the after laying open of the wound to the Chirurgion to dresse and cure it, is prejudicial to the safety & welfare of the body.

Sol. But if it be by way of commission, either by relapsing into the same sins, or multiplying of sinne in another kinde (both which wil dig up again our buried and forepast guilts) then I know no way of peace and safety, no way to allay these renewed accusations and stings, but by renewed sorrow and repentance. And verily what I delivered unto you heretofore about recovery from relapsing, that is the course presently to bee taken here: O let us haste in before the Lord with hearts

hearts trickling down with tears of blood, for old and present wounds; the very abundance of sorrow, the bitternesse of griefe, the art of selfe-affliction. I cannot say that sorrow of sorrow, that hatred of hatred, that indignation of indignation, that revenge of revenge, that repentance of repentance, which are here necessarily required, and that too with longest continuance. Do what thou will, shuffle off, cut to thy selfe a peace, thou shalt never have it, thy sinnes shall ever and anon gall, and vexe, and wound thee, until thou hast renewed thy bitternesse of most humbled sorrow for renewing of thy filthinesse and basenesse of thy audacious sinning.

But then suppose, that Satan through his malicious art doth revive our former guilt by his accusations, for our greater interruption and disquietment; what is now to be done? *Ob.*

I will shew you here briefly two things: *Sol:*

1 One is, how you may know that the reviving of former guilt be from Satan or no.

2 Another is, what is then to be done by us?

1 You may know that your sins are revived by Satan, from two effects.

How to know whether Satan revives former sins

1 One is from the desperate issues of their reviving: you may know whether a man be a friend, of a malicious enemy, who doth revive the errours and failings amongst men; a friend, he revives them that you may be bettered, either to reforme, if the thing be evill, or to bee circumspect whether the thing be true or false; but the malicious enemy hee revives them, onely to make you odious and loathsome. Now Satans reviving of former sins is ever odious, it is of evill for evill, his end is desperate: What is that? That is, that we might give up all possible interests in mercy, all hope of pardon and acceptance. Whence it is, where he revives

sins,

ſins, former ſins, hee bends the heart to ſome preſent miſchiefe, to renounce all hope of mercy, and to ſelfe-murder, and ſuch deſperate iſſues; both which are againſt the ends of God, and the deſires of an holy heart, which upon their reviving of ſinne, doe ever propoſe mercy and betterment unto the ſoule.

2 Another is from the filthy iſſues, which is this; He revives the ſting of ſinne, that hee may make us more bold and mad in ſinning: He revives ſin unto ſin, there is no hope of mercy, of recovery, therefore as good to go on as not; Whence he inclines the heart to a leaping into the water, to a wallowing in the mire, to a greedineſſe in the courſe of ſinning, which he doth the more eaſily win from the evill hearts of evill men, by thoſe temporary allayments and ceſſations of ſtinging guilt, which they obſerve in themſelves, by their furiouſneſſe, conſtant, and hardening revolu-

tions, or exercise of the same sins.

So that if you, whose hearts are tender, have been humbled for former sins, and are so upright as still to hate them, if former guilts be revived with an inclination either to give up all mercy, or to give over your selves now with licentiousness to the same or other sins: here is Satan in this, Satan now revives thy guilt, and now another course is to be taken.

2 The course then is this, and I beseech you mark it;

1 Strengthen thy heart with more detestations of the sins; the more he revives the guilty accusation, the more do thou revive thy upright detestations: And as he poures out malice to disturbe thy conscience, so doe thou pour out revenge to subdue the grounds of it; and if he vexeth thee, doe thou goe and vexe thy sins.

Thy case is not wicked, because a

2 Beleeve not a malicious accuser: Satan doth oft-times serve a Writ in the Kings name, without the Kings seale; he forgives where God

God doth not, and he binds where God hath releaſed: And this know, *It is God that juſtifieth, who then ſhal condemn?* If the King himſelf hath pardoned thee, how unjuſt is it, for the under-officer to arreſt and challenge? wicked Devill ſaith ſo.

3 But in caſe of frequent inquietations, when Satan will not be anſwered, but ſtill chargeth, now make thine appeale from him to God; and if hee charge thee in the Court of Conſcience, remove it wiſely to the higher Court of heaven; let God once more have the hearing, and the deciding. And now Satan, what haſt thou to ſay unto me? Thou haſt ſinned heretofore (ſaith Satan) and thy Judge doth know the truth of this indictment. I have (Satan) I confeſſe it, and my God doth know the truth of my ſorrow and repentance. Lord, doſt thou not know my tears, my returnings, my judgings of my ſelfe, my ſeekings of mercy and grace? Lord thou haſt known it, The Chriſtian muſt appeale.

and hast known my soul with thy pardoning and accepting mercy.

4 Rest the soul, and fasten it unto the bloud of Christ, which wil alwayes cry downe the testimonies and clamours of guilt; Nothing but that will satisfie God, and vanquish Satan; and then by faith, not only lay hand on mercy, but hold out the stability of mercy. The Kings pardon will serve twenty yeares hence in case of suit. Satan may often trouble and question, but Gods accepting of thee into mercy, wil (I am sure it may) quiet and uphold thee.

14 The last spring of doubtings was, silence in the Conscience, long silence there.

For the closing of this spring, and with it, this subject of doubtings, observe these particulars in a word.

1 The speech of Conscience, what that is.

2 The speechlesnesse of Conscience, what and how.

3 To make Conscience speake againe

againe, what required.

4 To ſupport our ſelves in the times of its ſilence, what can and may.

1 The ſpeech of Conſcience: This is no more then its teſtimony for us, or againſt us; for Conſcience is intimate with our ſecret frames, and intentions, and motives, and actions: By its naturall light it can tell much, by implanted light more, by renewed and ſanctified light, moſt of all. Now the ſpeech of Conſcience for us, is nothing elſe but an approbation of our eſtate, anſwerable to the Word, acquiting us againſt all feares and objections that we are the ſons of God, that we are truly changed, that we ſincerely love him, beleeve in Chriſt, and walke before him; for really the voyce of Conſcience is but the eccho of the voyce of the Word, and ſaith unto us touching our particular, what the Word delivers in the generall. Its voyce is but the Aſſumption, and the voyce of the Word.

The ſpeech of conſcience, what.

Word is but the Propoſition: The Word ſaith, that ſhould be; and Conſcience ſaith, here it is: The Word requires ſuch and ſuch things in a man to be ſaved, and who is in favour with God, and Conſcience brings them out, and anſwers for the perſon.

The ſpeechleſneſſe of conſcience what it is.

2 The ſpeechleſneſſe, or ſilence of Conſcience, is the ſuſpenſion of its determining and acquiting acts touching our eſtate in generall, or touching ſome particular doubts: Sometimes Conſcience calls upon us, and ſometimes we call upon conſcience. In matters of direction to practiſe or forbearance, we uſually heare a reall & inward word, Do it not, or, Thou mayſt doe it: In after doubts we call upon Conſcience for its teſtimony, In the uprightneſſe of my heart did I it, and my conſcience doth beare me witneſſe.

Now of all the ſilences of conſcience, that is heavieſt which befalls us in our ſpirituall combats and trials; wherein our gracious con-

condition is queſtioned, but cannot be iſſued, becauſe conſcience holds up, and doth not teſtifie for us by any ſenſible approbation and acquitance, which is cauſed diverſly

1 So metimes through particular miſ-behaviours againſt the directing voyce of conſcience, theſe hold in the acquiting voyce of conſcience, for conſcience will not ſpeake for us, if we preſume to ſin againſt it. Silence in conſcience diverſly cauſed.

2 Sometimes through diſ-regard to the voyce of God in the Miniſtery; for Conſcience takes not that well, which the Word takes ill: and therefore God doth uſually make us know our neglects of his Word, by the ſilences of our conſciences: And aſſuredly ſomething is ordinarily amiſs, when Conſcience ſpeaks unto us neither good nor bad.

3 Sometimes Conſcience is ſilent, to make us look higher then conſcience, and that wee might know there is a higher Court to which wee muſt make our addreſſes.

4 Some-

4 Sometimes Conſcience is ſilent, to make us ſee upon what bottomes our faith is grounded, whether we can beleeve, becauſe God ſaith, as well as rejoyce, becauſe Conſcience ſpeaketh.

3 But to make Conſcience ſpeak, what muſt we doe? We have had its gracious teſtimonies, by which we have been much comforted and ſupported: How ſhall we recover it to ſpeech againe?

I anſwer;

The waies to recover conſcience to ſpeech againe.

1 Speak to God, and then God may ſpeak to Conſcience, & Conſcience will ſpeake to thee. God hath a greater command over Conſcience, then it hath over us: It is with God and Conſcience, as with a King and his Courtiers, let the King ſpeake kindly to a Petitioner, the Courtiers will then imbrace him lovingly; and indeed Conſcience will carry Gods face, and expreſſe his diſpoſitions of love: Therefore this doe, ſpeak to the Lord, 1. To ſhew thee the cauſe of Conſciences ſilence. 2. To

give thee the testimony of his own Spirit, which will draw with it againe the testimony of thine own conscience, *Rom.*8,16.

2 Speak to duty: Be sure thou doe not displease Conscience: If thou hast, repent, and adde no more to make Conscience displeased, or silent.

4 But how may we support our selves in the times of silence?

I answer, thou mayst comfort thy selfe, if

1 The VVord can approve thee; the testimony of the Word is ever open, though that of Conscience be not: what is the reason? Because men may have a constant audience and triall of their estates. And take one thing by the way, If the Word (which is alwayes open and speaking) if it acquits thee, Conscience (though now silent, whensoever it speakes) will cleare thee.

2 Thou hast and dost approve the VVord: How is that? That is, If the VVord bee thy rule, thy light,

light, by which thou haſt & doſt walk; for when Conſcience comes to ſpeak, it gives its ſentence from the VVord (by which thou walkeſt,) and of thy frame and courſe which thou preſerveſt in an upright anſwerableneſſe to the directions of the VVord.

An Addition of foure other cauſes of Doubtings, with a briefe reſolution of them.

I SEnce of ſinfull workings. O! ſaith a diſtreſſed ſoule, Certainly my condition is ſtarke naught, and I have no right to Chriſt, nor to any mercy, I may not beleeve: VVhy? Becauſe I never found ſuch vile workings of heart as of late: I feele a wonderfull rebellion in my heart; I cannot thinke on any good, nor ſet upon any good, but an army of evill is in me, oppoſing and hindering me.

Sol. To a ſoule in ſuch a condition, I would

would (for his help) prescribe these five subsequent Considerations.

1 When grace comes in truth, it is ever of that power to make such discoveries, and to raise such stirs, as the soule never felt before; for Grace is a new nature, and a new light, and a new active principle. It is put into the soule for that very end, to finde and lay out sin, yea and to expell and thrust it out. The judgement was never so convinced before, nor Conscience so qualified before, nor the will and affections so spiritualized before; therefore never marvell at the strange workings. When a child is conceived in the wombe, it is not now with the woman as in former times; and whensoever Christ is formed in the soule, it is not with that soul as in old times. There is that now saine in, which must purge thee, and rule thee.

2 If good be wrought, evil will work and oppose it. When Christ was born, all *Jerusalem* was troubled;

bled; so when grace is wrought, sin will stir. Indeed if grace came into the soule either by a finall and totall cessation of sinne, that there were no sin residing in the soule, into the which grace comes, then thou shouldst feele no stir at all: Thus it shall be in Heaven; Grace there shall be alone; Holinesse, and nothing but holinesse there, and therefore no combat, no stir: But thus it never will be on earth: Sinne may be alone in some mens hearts, but grace is never alone in any mans heart in this life. Or if grace came into the soule by a peaceable resignation, if sinfull flesh would without any more adoe make a full and free surrender, and give it possession without any dispute and cavill, then also thou mightest expect a calmnesse, and a cessation of arms, no vile stirrings. But O Christian, Grace and sin, *The Spirit and the flesh are contrary one to the other*, and therefore they *lust* one against the other. Fire and water will not lye quiet.

Gal. 5. 17

quiet. Sad indeed were thy condition, if thou hadst such a frame of (vaine) good, against which no sinfull part in thee would oppose.

Every regenerate man hath a double man in him, the new man, and the old man; that would do good, this would not doe good; that would pray, this would not; that would mourne, this would not; that would beleeve, this would not.

3 But then thirdly, thou who feeleſt such a rebelling and opposing flesh in thee, what is that which thou doſt oppoſe? It is true, thou feeleſt an untoward, rebellious nature yet within thee, but what side takeſt thou? *It is not I*, said *Paul*, *but sin that dwelleth in me.* Sin in him opposed good, but *Paul* himselfe approved good, and delighted in good, and willed good. Rom. 7.

The same Apostle speaking of the co-habitation, and the co-operation of flesh and spirit in regenerate persons, that the one did

did *lust* against the other, and the one was *contrary* to the other, and that by reason of the rebellion and unrulinesse of the one, *we*
Gal. 5. 17. *could not doe the good which we would*; he yet comforteth them in such a condition in the next words, *If*
Vers. 18. *yee bee led by the Spirit, yee are not under the Law.* As if he had said, notwithstanding all this rebellious opposition of your flesh, if yet yee yeeld not to bee servants to it, but approve of, and incline unto, and follow in your hearts, and courses the rules of the Spirit, the condition *is* very good and safe.

So that though the evill remaining in us doth oppose the good in us, yet if we our selves oppose not the good, our condition may be good.

Fourthly, as there is evill *in* thee, opposing of thee *in* any good, so there is something in thee also opposing of that evill. Dost thou not condemne that hardnesse which hinders thee from

from mourning, and ſheddeſt many a teare becauſe thou canſt not mourne? Doſt thou not ſtrive with the Lord by many prayers, and in the uſe of all his Ordinances againſt that unbeleeving and rebelliouſly working nature of thine? Doſt thou not with *Paul*, conflict with it, groan under it, cry out, *O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me?*

And ſurely neither the ſenſe of this, nor the reſiſtance of this, nor fervent deſires of deliverance from this, can be any evill ſignes of thy condition.

Laſtly, in the ſenſe of inward rebellions and workings, thy way is not to nouriſh doubting, but thy duty is to ſtir up beleeving.

When *Paul* felt that agony twixt the law of his members, and the law of his minde, indeed he was much troubled at it, but yet he did not conclude againſt his condition in grace; No, but he acquits that (Rom. 7.25. *So then with the minde I my ſelf ſerve the Law of*

of God, though with the flesh the law of sin) and sets his faith to work, vers.24. *Who shall deliver me?* v.25. *I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.* Marke his practise: This is my condition, I feel rebellious lusts, yea I feel them sometimes captivating of mee, what course shall I now take to be delivered of them? to vanquish them? I conflict with them, but I cannot conquer them: I cannot conquer them, yea but Jesus Christ can conquer them, and deliver me from them, and to him will I goe by faith.

Thus must thou doe in the sense of that native rebellion and vile operation of thy flesh; Thou must by faith goe unto Christ, thou must acknowledge thy vilenesse, and thy insufficiency, and also his Sufficiency: Thou must exalt Jesus Christ by faith in his Mediatorship, and trust on him, that he will by his Almighty Spirit crucifie thy sinfull flesh more, and (which was one end of his coming into the world) destroy those works

works of ſin and Satan.

2 Another cauſe of doubting in a Chriſtian, may be the ſenſe of wrath. O! ſaith ſuch a one, would you have me to beleeve, or imagine you that I can doe ſo, I who feel the very wrath of God in my ſoule, and the terrours of the Almighty wounding me for my tranſgreſſions? What, can, or may I beleeve mercy for me, who now feel wrath upon mee? can I beleeve that God will bee mercifull, whom I ſenſibly apprehend to be wrathful?

This is a notable caſe, and needs a wary and circumſpect reſolution: Nevertheleſſe I ſhall at leaſt endeavour to ungirt this burden for a troubled ſoule.

1 There are two ſorts of perſons who in this life may feel the wrath of God.

Firſt, ſuch as are unqueſtionably wicked; of whom ſome of them feel the wrath of God, as the beginning of their everlaſting perdition: That wrath inflicted on

on them is but the beginning of a just hell due unto them. Thus *Judas* felt the wrath of God: And some of them feel the wrath of God as a means for their humiliation and conversion. Thus they in *Acts* 2. 37. who were *pricked in their hearts*, and thereupon cryed out, *What shall we do?* felt the wrath of God.

Secondly, such as are unquestionably good; of whom some have felt Gods wrath in case of desertion, as *Heman*, *Ezra*, *Job*, and others, and some in case of notorious corruption, or sinning, as *David*, whose *bones* were *broken*, for it, and *Gods face hid* from him for it, and his *moisture turned into the drought of summer*.

2 Againe, you must distinguish of those effects which appeare in persons under the sense of divine wrath, for they are twofold.

1 Some feel the wrath of God, and are either onely inraged against God with blasphemies, or inraging their hearts the more to goe

goe on in sinning against God, thinking at least by the pleasure of sinne to drowne the sense of wrath, or running into absolute despaire of Gods mercy; and therefore never attempting any course of repentance, because they give up all hope of mercy. Where there is such a sense of wrath as this, in all respects, and for ever, the condition is very fearfull.

2 Some feel the wrath of God, and are hereupon (occasionally) induced either to the study and care of a holy reformation of their sinfull hearts and wayes, or to a particular restauration of themselves from grosse sins into which they are falne, and for which now they feele the sore displeasure of an angry Father.

If thy condition be either of these, that thou feelest wrath, and that hath driven thee to a search of thy naturall estate, and to the discovery of it, and to an humbling for it, and to all the meanes

by which thou mayeſt be delivered as well (and rather) from thy ſinfulneſſe, as from Gods wrath; or if this wrath felt awakens thy conſcience, and hath been a means to ſcourge thee out of ſome particular ſinning, to thy former and better walkings with God, thou mayeſt now ſafely beleeve on mercy; yea though thou as yet feeleſt wrath, yet mayeſt thou beleeve mercy: And my reaſon is this, becauſe now mercy is thy portion, thy condition now is right under many promiſes of mercy to pardon thee, for it is a truly penitential condition. See *Eſa.* 55.7. *Ezek.* 18.21,22. *Hoſ.* 14.1,2,4.

3 Though mercy be thy portion, yet know thou, that the ſenſe of wrath will not off, untill thou doſt beleeve actually on that mercy. It is not mercy in the Promiſe which alone can remove the ſenſe of wrath, but it muſt be mercy applied by faith; for till faith works in the ſoule of a man,

till

till the poore ſoule looks on God through the Perſpective of faith, God appears not as a merciſull, but as a wrathfull God to it.

And therefore thou being in ſuch a condition as I have delivered, thou mayeſt ſafely venture on mercy, though thou feeleſt wrath (the fore-named Saints did ſo) and upon beleeving thou ſhalt in due time feele the ſenſe of mercy to take off the ſenſe of wrath: Thy faith will ſee a reconciled God, and then thou ſhalt enjoy a pacified conſcience.

3 A third cauſe of doubting, may be a condemning conſcience. But ſaith the trembling Chriſtian, My conſcience tels me of my ſinnings, and of wonderfull ſinfulneſſe within me; and God is greater then my conſcience who will aſſuredly condemne me; O I may not beleeve.

Sol. This ſeems to be a knotty caſe, Whether a perſon may beleeve Gods abſolving of him, though

Conscience in him bee condemning? I will deliver my opinion thus:

First, you must distinguish of a condemning conscience: Conscience may either condemne;

1 A mans actions; Or,

2 His person.

1 A mans actions are condemned by Conscience, when Conscience being rightly inlightned and informed by the Word of God, pronounceth of them that they are evill, and damnable, that they are contrary to Gods holinesse and glory, and therefore are to be abhorred, and crucified, and forsaken.

2 A mans person is condemned by Conscience, not onely when Conscience findes sinnes in the person, but likewise the person in sinnes, (*i.e.*) not onely such corruptions in the heart, but also the heart approving, and loving of them, and resolved to keep them, and goe on in them.

Now observe me in two Conclusions

clusions answerable to these two Propositions:

1 If Conscience condemns thy person, I confesse thou hast no reason to beleeve mercy for thy selfe: If thy Conscience tells thee to the face of God, thou art in a foule sinfull course, and hast been called upon by the voice of the Word, and its voice, to come out of it, and thou dost not leave it; nay, art resolved to pursue it, and so insist on it; now God is greater then thy conscience, and will assuredly condemne thee.

2 If Conscience condemnes thy actions onely, then thou mayest, notwithstanding that condemnation, beleeve on mercy. My meaning is this; Though the Conscience by its discerning light, represents unto thee much sinfulnesse in thy nature and former course, and though it doth condemne these to bee vile, and most fit to be crucified, abhorred, and forsaken, this condemnation hinders not the right

of beleeving: Nay, no man indeed should beleeve, unlesse his conscience doth condemne sinne in him; not onely shew him his sinnes, but assure him that they are evill, and unworthy his love; nay most worthy of his detestation and mortification.

Secondly, you must distinguish of times, when conscience doth condemne a man; there are two times of a Christian.

1 Some are open and free; Hee is himselfe, and besides that, hee heares both parties, as well what is for himselfe, as what is against himselfe; yea and weighs matters in controversie in the right ballance of Gods Sanctuary, not in Satans ballance of cunning suggestions. Will conscience condemne thy person at such a time, and under such circumstances? Nay, will not the word of God acquit thee at such a time against all feares, for the substance and reality of a pious condition?

2. Some are clouded and darkned,

ned, either with melancholy, or afflictions, or temptations, wherein the Christian seeth his face through a false glasse, (just as a Title is made by a deceitfull and cunning Lawyer) not according to truth, not all of it, but some of it: What is past heretofore for action and affection, or what hath falne out, not in the course of life since a mans conversion, but onely in case of surprisall and captivity. Now perhaps conscience may condemne thee, but this is an illegall sentence, it is a corrupted judgement, and is reversible; God will not judge of thee, as Conscience in such a case doth; Nay he wil repeale it, and disannull it.

4 A fourth cause of doubtings is, a feare lest a man hath sinned that great sinne against the Holy Ghost: And the maine inducement to credit this, is, a sinning against cleare knowledge, which is one ingredient in that sinne. Now this is my condition, saith a

troubled ſoule, I have not onely ſinned, but ſinned againſt light ſhining in the Miniſtery, and working on my conſcience; therefore I may rather conclude then queſtion it, Mercy belongs not to me.

Sol. To helpe a conſcience thus inthralled, I would wiſh that ſuch a perſon would firſt be informed; Secondly, be directed.

1 The information which I would commend in this caſe, is fourefold.

Firſt, that the ſinne againſt the Holy Ghoſt, is not any ſinne which a man commits through ignorance: Whatſoever the ſinne or ſinnes have beene, (whereof the party ſtands guilty) whether againſt the Law, or againſt the Goſpel, ſuppoſe it be one, or many hainous ſinnes, yet if the perſon be in a ſtate of blindneſſe and ignorance, if there is a neſcience of the fact; if hee knowes not what he doth, this ignorance priviledgeth the ſinnings thus far,

that

that therefore they are not the sin against the Holy Ghost.

Secondly, the sinne against the Holy Ghost is not any sin against the Gospel, which is elicited and acted through a mis-beliefe or mis-perswasion: If the sin be a sleighting of Evangelicall doctrines, nay a persecuting of them, and of the professours of them, yet if these acts of opposition depend totally on errour in the judgement, on a judgement mis-perswaded (i.e.) rather believing them not to bee truths, rather thinking those wayes to bee false wayes; I say this mis-beliefe preserves such sinnings yet from being sins against the Holy Ghost, 1 Tim. 1. 13 because the sinne against the Holy Ghost supposeth light even to conviction and approbation. See *Heb.* 6. 4, 5.

Thirdly, the sinne against the Holy Ghost is not every sinning against knowledge. These are not reciprocall propositions, every sinne against the Holy Ghost is against

against knowledge, and every sin against knowledge is the sin against the Holy Ghost. The former is true, but the latter is not; for many a converted man sinneth against knowledge, who yet never sinneth the sin against the Holy Ghost.

In two cases a man sinning against knowledge, doth not yet sin that sin against the Holy Ghost: One is, the case of a strong and violent temptation: Another is, the case of a sudden & turbulent passion: It is the same with *Peters* case against his knowledge denying and forswearing his Master. If *Paul* before his conversion had had *Peters* knowledge, he had sinned this sinne against the Holy Ghost; And if *Peter* in his deniall had had *Pauls* malice joyned with his knowledge, hee had also sinned that sinne: but the mis-beleefe of the one before his conversion, and the infirmity of the other after it, preserved from this sin. Error

rour miſ-led the one, and ſudden feare ſurpriſed the other.

Fourthly, there are three horrible ſinnings which doe attend that ſin againſt the holy Ghoſt; and the Scripture (which wee were beſt exceeding warily to follow in reſolving this caſe) expreſly delivers them.

1 One is, totall Apoſtaſie from the truths of Jeſus Chriſt knowne and taſted. The truths of Chriſt muſt 1. be known and apprehended, 2. known and taſted, they muſt be approved. 3. And then the perſon fals from theſe. 4. Nay his fall is not particular, (which is incident to the beſt) it is a totall fall, not a falling in the way, but a falling from the way of truth, *Heb.* 6. 4. *If they were once inlightned and taſted, &c. If, ver.* 6. *they ſhall fall away.*

2 A ſecond is, a malicious oppugnation of that truth which was once known and taſted, and from which now the perſon is falne, called *Heb.* 6. 6. *A crucifying*

of

And despiting the spirit of Grace.

of the Sonne of God afresh; And Heb. 10. 26. *A wilfull sinning after that we have received the knowledge of the truth.* And it was evident in the Pharisees, who saw and knew the light, but hated, and persecuted it unto the death.

3 A third is, finall impenitencie. Whosoever sins the sin against the holy Ghost, he neither doth repent, nor can repent: He is so justly and for ever forsaken of God, and given up to a reprobate sense, and a seared Conscience that hee cannot repent; though (perhaps) he may see his course to be evill, yet it is impossible (saith the Apostle in *Heb. 6. 6.*) to renew him to repentance.

FINIS.